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THE
COTTAGE
OF
FRIENDSHIP.



THE
C O T T A G E
OF
F R I E N D S H I P,
A LEGENDARY PASTORAL.

By SILVIANA PASTORELLA.

“Lo! Colin, here the place, whose pleasant sight
“From other shades hath weaned my wand’ring mind:
“Tell me, what wants me here, to work delight?
“The simple air, the gentle warbling wind,
“So calm, so cool, as no where else I find:
“The grassy ground with dainty daisies dight,
“The bramble bush, where birds of every kind
“To th’ water-fall their tunes attemper right.”

L O N D O N:

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MDCCLXXXVIII.



P R E F A C E.

IF any part of a book is written with humility, it is generally the preface. The only cause I can assign for such affected modesty, is to put the critics in good hu-

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mour; this is paying their candour and impartiality for poor a compliment, that I shall not attempt to apologize for the imperfections of the following pages; neither take away the relish of the story by producing a bill of fare, which is frequently the case in

in a preface. May this composition, then, receive the merit it justly deserves, to keep up the spirits of the Author!—but flattery cannot be admitted in the Cottage of Friendship.

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THE
C O T T A G E

OF
F R I E N D S H I P.

WHEN the human heart is oppressed with affliction, it is apt to chuse those scenes which inspire
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what is termed a melancholy pleasure, where the beauties of nature in its romantic and most secluded state affords room for a series of uninterrupted reflections, free from the molestation of an insipid or intruding multitude.

Mr. Bromley was one of those men who could only taste the smallest comfort from such refined and pensive meditations : he had early in life lost the sole female object that could ever engage his affections, and the only alleviation to his sorrows was to search after those situations which could give him

him the satisfaction of ruminating on past misfortunes, and where he might enjoy the charms of rural life, and admire and adore that Power who has been so beneficent to his creatures, that he not only supplies them with food and raiment, but also feasts the eye with the most fertile meadows, woods, hills, dales, and the richest views that can please the sight, or gratify the nicest observer.

Mr. Bromley had visited almost every spot in England worthy peculiar remark; and his last excursion was into

Berkshire.—It was the middle of summer, and the heat excessive; therefore his humanity led him, to give the horses a reprieve during the most fatiguing part of the day, and he ordered his postillion to stop at the next inn, till the fervour of mid-day was somewhat abated: ere he arrived there, he was infinitely delighted to observe that to be the finest county he had yet discovered; the nearer he approached this temporary dwelling, additional beauties presented themselves to his view.

When

When he alighted from the chaise, he was shewn into a handsome apartment; and if he was charmed before, what were his present sensations, on beholding the most enchanting prospects around him, which before even fancy (highly as she exalts our ideas) had never figured to his imagination! On one side an extensive hanging wood formed a kind of amphitheatre, and was terminated by an ancient and illustrious seat of nobility, which, rising above the shades that surround it, had the most magnificent appearance. To give the final

shadow to this well-finished picture, the bottom of the hill was bordered as it were with the dimpling current of old Thames, which, flowing in serpentine meanders, completed this most perfect landscape. On every other side the eye was relieved by that pleasing variety which the pencil of Nature knows so well to execute.

If the Reader has taste (and such I trust he has), his own conceptions will delineate, much better than my pen can do, the enraptured feelings of Mr. Bromley.

The

The horses, which before he only considered from pity, were now perfectly at liberty to rest their weary feet. To have quitted such a place without minute observation, would have been putting every finer nerve upon the rack. And when Sol with milder influence yielded a more genial warmth, when the wanton Zephyrs began to sport with the milk-maids tresses, and Evening approached with all her dewy fragrance; Mr. Bromley could no longer deny himself the luxury of taking a nearer survey, when even the perspective had so compensated all his researches.

After he had rambled for some time, and each moment found objects new and pleasing, he discovered a winding path, which was so interwoven with woodbines and eglantine, that it totally excluded every "bright-haired sun-beam."

Though he was on a beautiful terrace which commanded the most extensive views, and there seemed nothing wanting to render this a second Paradise, but to obliterate the sin of our first Mother; yet Mr. Bromley had a strong pro-

propensity to see whither this little opening would convey him, which was only wide enough for two people to walk a-breast; but what excited his curiosity still more, on each side of it was planted different shrubs, which were in bloom, and perfumed the air with their sweets.

Having pursued his way through many turnings, he at length found himself upon the finest verdure, interperfed with wild thyme, and furrounded with every flower, that could embellish this most delightful spot. As

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the ground on which he stood had the appearance of a garden, tho' laid out with superior taste to any thing he had seen, "There certainly," said he to himself, "must be a near inhabitant
"to so charming a place!"

While he was looking around, to discover if there could be an adjacent habitation he had not observed, he heard something rustling in a small grove of trees that were behind him: he started, half afraid, and half surprised, when he saw the most beautiful little spaniel, playing with a lamb. As they both appeared equally meek,
the

the one very unlike the upstart puppies of the great world, and the other of course innocent, as its nature is such; he went up to them, and was astonished to find the one as tame as the other, and that the lamb was no more afraid of him than the little dog.

“ Well,” said he, “ I must now be
“ near the abode of happiness. Alas!
“ what a reflection upon man! Had
“ this harmless creature been brought
“ up among mankind in general, it
“ would have run from me as from a
“ wolf. Thus is it with the best of us
“ in life : if we ourselves are harmless

“ and unaccustomed to deceit, we do
“ not suspect it in others. Did this
“ poor lamb know how brutally its
“ fellows are treated by our race, it
“ would have dreaded falling a victim
“ to inhumanity, and therefore shun-
“ ned me; also the spaniel, never
“ having been disturbed by the robber
“ or the murderer, is passive as its
“ companion.”

They had both collars fastened
round their necks, which made Mr.
Bromley very solicitous to see if there
was any inscription, that might lead

to a discovery of the owner : the dog's was a silver one with the following words :

“ Shouldest thou be so unfortunate
“ to stray from the asylum of friend-
“ ship, may some kind wanderer re-
“ store thee safely to the Sisters of the
“ Cottage !”

The same was written on a gold collar, and tied with a blue ribbon on the lamb's neck.

“ Surely,”

“ Surely,” said Mr. Bromley, “ this
“ must be enchantment, or a vision !
“ However, I will lose no time to seek
“ out the Cottage of Friendship: Per-
“ haps,” thought he, “ I may be the
“ wanderer, and bring comfort to the
“ sisters, in having found their little
“ favourites.”

He therefore took up the spaniel,
and the lamb followed its affectionate
play-mate : but how surprized was he,
in passing round the grove of trees from
whence came the objects of his atten-
tion,

tion, to perceive a small thatched building !

It stood in a crescent of stately oaks, which served as a relief to the paler greens that more nearly encircled this seat of rusticity. In the front of it was a field, with here and there a clump of trees. In it was a small flock of sheep and a cow. Close to the cottage was a continuation of the garden already described. The roof of the dwelling was thatched, and the other part seemed composed of roots and flints ; it was entwined with ivy, honey-

ney-suckles, and jasmynes, which, as if aware of the content within, had crept thro' the window of one of the apartments to join the happy Sisters.

So much was Mr. Bromley pleased with the outside, and, like human-kind in general, always wishing to attain a something we are not possessed of, Mr. Bromley had a great desire to see the fair Cottagers, of whom he entertained the highest idea; but the little dog and lamb were too near for him to frame any excuse of having found them astray; and night drawing
on

on apace, he fancied he might alarm the peaceful inhabitants, and likewise be too late to find his road back. He therefore determined to prolong his visit till the next morning, and ruminate on some plausible apology for disturbing their repose. As the door was shut, and no one could be seen or heard, he thought they might retire and rise early, or be engaged in some evening duties they would not chuse to be interrupted in.

As Mr. Bromley returned, he had scarcely emerged from the little path,
before

before he saw a female figure advancing towards him; but, as she had a milk-pail on one arm, and a basket of strawberries on the other, he supposed she was, at least, only an attendant on the amiable Friends.

As she came nearer, he saw she was a pretty girl, and appeared very young. She had a chip-hat on, with green ribbands, and otherwise attired as a neat cottager. When she passed Mr. Bromley, she was singing some country song, and seemed perfectly unused to disguise.

He

He had a great inclination to have asked her from whence she came, and whither she was going; but diffidence restrained his curiosity.

At first he was astonished she did not shew some surprize at meeting a stranger in that sequestered walk; but, when he recollected it must lead to that seat which belonged to the owner of the woods, and doubtless many people passed that road, he ceased to wonder, and arrived at the inn full of the most ardent

ardent wishes for the return of morning.

The mind, when elated with expectation of pleasure, can seldom sufficiently calm itself to admit of sleep; the ideas must be quiet and undisturbed, or totally spent with sorrow, ere that balmy restorer can shed his influence over our senses; therefore it may readily be supposed, that an imagination like Mr. Bromley's, so crowded with the imagery of what he had discovered, and pleased with the ideas of what he had yet to see, could not easily be
com-

composed: if he forgot himself, the cottage was remembered; and as often as it appeared to his fancy, he awaked to disappointment. However, that night, which seemed the longest he had known, at length bade him adieu; and as early as he could with any propriety he bent his steps towards the seat of harmony.

When he drew near the happy spot, he felt a timidity which had almost overpowered his resolution; but he roused himself from his imaginary fears by the reflection, that sincere friendship is generally attended by most other virtues,

virtues, especially those of forgiveness and condescension ; and from that idea he pursued his walk with additional courage.

When he approached the grove of trees, the little dog ran up to him, licked his hands, and seemed to own him as a third inhabitant of the sweet abode.

This encouraged Mr. Bromley to proceed to the front of the cottage, where he saw the same female who passed him the night before. She was

seated on a stool, spinning. Mr. Bromley would have retreated ; but the innocent girl left her wheel, and, running up to him, said,

“ Pray, Sir, have you lost your way? or did you want my mistress?”

Mr. Bromley replied, “ He was very much ashamed to intrude upon the happy life they led ; but—”

“ Ashamed!” answered this daughter of simplicity, “ then I am sure you are a bad man, for no good one has any
“ reason

“reason to be ashamed of his actions.

“Come, Feather,” said she to the little dog, “let us run in, and take care of our poor mistress; for here is a bad man come to take her away.”

She would have hastened from him; but, Mr. Bromley stopping her, said,

“Do not be alarmed, my dear; I did not mean I was ashamed of having committed any ill; but, in public life, it is the fashion to say frequently more than we think, and bad habits are too easily contracted:
“when

“when I spoke, I had forgotten I
“was happily retired from its deceits
“and insincerity.”

“Well,” said the harmless maiden,
“I am glad I don’t live amongst ye :
“my mistresses and I never speak what
“we do not mean ; but tell me what
“you are ashamed of that is not
“wrong.”

“Then,” said Mr. Bromley, “I will
“be explicit ; I am so delighted with
“the outside of this cottage, that I
“have a great desire to become ac-

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“quainted

“quainted with the owners of it; but
“I feared I should be deemed imper-
“tinent, troublesome, and an unwel-
“come guest, as I am a traveller from
“that tumultuous world you are so
“superior to.”

“My mistresses are very good,” an-
swered the fair rustic; “and I am sure
“they will be happy to see any gen-
“tleman who is so well-looking, and
“speaks so prettily.”

What a proof this of the innocence
2 of

of her heart! and also how unfit for
any other situation!

“Her youngest lady,” she said,
“was at home; but the eldest with her
“lamb was gone to a poor woman,
“who was ill, to carry her children
“some money; but, if Mr. Bromley
“would like to see her Mistress Lavi-
“nia, she was at work in the Bower.”

Mr. Bromley said, “if she would
“make some introduction for him, he
“should be much indebted to her.”

This she instantly complied with, and returned in a few minutes, to say, “Lavinia would admit him.”

The first room he passed thro’ was ornamented with various pictures, which seemed to have been executed by the ladies themselves. In it stood a harpsichord, and a guittar lay on the table ; also many drawings and implements for painting.

This led to the Bower ; the same shrubs which graced the outside, also
beau-

beautified this apartment within; and the addition of roses, and many other sweets, which lent their aid to adorn this rural spot, entwining themselves in a circumambient form entirely round the sides of the room, rendered it the most fragrant and delightful Bower Mr. Bromley had ever seen. There were a number of little birds, which hopped in or out as nature directed them, and sang and built their nests in the different branches that enriched this enchanting arbour. Here restraint and confinement were banished, and

B 3 every

every bird, insect, or animal, found the dwelling of tenderness and benevolence.

Figure to yourself, Reader, such a scene as this, and with nothing more you must pronounce it an Elysium; but, to make it more complete, when Mr. Bromley entered, Lavinia was seated there. She had been feeding a favourite nightingale, and it was pouring forth its gratitude in a song.

Lavinia was an elegant figure; but I hope it is sufficient to say, though not
cu-

customary in these compositions, that she had rather a more pleasing face than a beautiful one; a fine openness of countenance adorned her features, shaded with the most delicate tints of melancholy, and softened with the benignity of religion. She was dressed in a loose white muslin vest, fastened with a green sash. Her hair was a pale-brown, and flowed in ringlets to her waist. She had a wreath of myrtle in blossom round her head, which was the only ornament she wore. She was amusing herself with dividing various kinds of moss.

As Mr. Bromley advanced, she rose; and Nature's colouring added a lively tinge to the cheek of modesty. She received him with the smile of meekness and condescension, and would have spoken; but Mr. Bromley interrupted her in the following words:

“ Can you forgive, Madam, this
“ daring intrusion from one who has
“ no pretension or apology to offer for
“ thus invading the holy sanctuary of
“ friendship? I am a wanderer, in pursuit of some alleviation to a heart
“ almost

“ almost overwhelmed with affliction.
“ Ever an admirer of rusticity, I have
“ constantly chosen those places which
“ could most forcibly gratify the only
“ satisfaction now left me on this side
“ the grave. Strolling in the wood, I
“ espied the little path which leads to
“ your peaceful habitation. Never
“ expecting to find the seat of happiness
“ in this strange motley world,
“ wonder not, Madam, that, when I
“ had discovered it, my soul was in
“ such extacy, it carried me beyond
“ myself; and to be known to the owners
“ of it, was a luxury I could not
B 5 “ resist.

“ resist. Unused to dissimulate, and
“ thinking that Art was an outcast here,
“ I determined to throw myself at the
“ feet of Virtue, and implore that pity
“ which not even an insect is here de-
“ nied: but, you will say, they are in-
“ nocent; while man, the lord of the
“ creation, and who ought to be the
“ wisest and best, is most to be dread-
“ ed. His knowledge is often the
“ instrument of destruction to his fel-
“ low-creatures; therefore to bid you
“ fear me not, will be, alas! no con-
“ solation to any alarm you may have
“ imbibed; but if you will favour me
“ so

" so far, gentle Lady, as to listen to my
 " unhappy story, methinks your sym-
 " pathy will lighten my distresses;
 " and if I may have permission to
 " be sometimes a visiter at the happy
 " Cottage, you shall be perfectly satisf-
 " fied as to the truth of my assertions,
 " and be free from any apprehensions
 " that I have deceived you."

Mr. Bromley had so much the ap-
 pearance of an honest man, and he
 apparently felt so strongly every sen-
 tence he uttered, that Lavinia was

entirely relieved from any anxiety she might at first have suffered.

She said, "His manner bore so little the aspect of disguise, that she was already interested in his history;" but added, "that before two young women could with propriety admit a male visitor, they must be certain he was the character he represented himself to be."

She solicited his forgiveness for speaking so abruptly; but said, "If he ventured into rural life, he must expect

“expect Sincerity in her plainest
“garb.”

Mr. Bromley thanked Lavinia for having shewn him so much candour, and would have proceeded to his narrative; but she begged he would defer that kindness till the return of her friend Miranda, “who,” she said, “always shared her pleasures.”

She then ordered Lucinda (for that was the name of the innocent attendant) to procure Mr. Bromley some refreshment. As it was early, she brought him

a basin of new milk, with some of the nicest butter and home-made cake he had ever tasted.

Lavinia observed, " That their
" whole subsistence was vegetables,
" fruits, and milk, with wines made by
" their own hands, and composed from
" some of the flowers of their planting."
She said, " Since their retirement, they
" ceased to find a relish for that food
" which is daily massacred to pamper
" the luxurious appetites of man."
She observed, " That if happiness
" could be enjoyed without alloy, it
" would

“ would certainly have found admittance in their little cottage ; but, “ alas ! ” said Lavinia (and a tear twinkled in her eye), “ if we have “ nothing in the present, yet the past “ or the future will in some degree cast “ a cloud over the serenest horizon.”

Here a deep sigh escaped her ; and Mr. Bromley found that it is in other regions we must look for pleasure, unadulterated with pain ; but, as Religion is the path, he perceived, when at Friendship’s Cottage, he was still pursuing that desirable abode.

Thus

Thus far he felt happy, and was blessing his lucky fortune, when Miranda returned from her charitable excursion. As Lucinda had given her some information of the stranger who was with Lavinia, she was not surprized to see a gentleman with her friend.

Lavinia gave an explanation of Mr. Bromley's visit, which before had been painful to him to relate.

Miranda.

Miranda appeared equally affable as her companion, and still more desirous if possible to hear his history.

She was a year or two older than Lavinia, and had a prettier face, though not so elegant a form. She was the picture of sweetness and humility, with rather a more sprightly countenance than her sister friend. When she entered, she had on a veil, which she instantly threw off. Her hair was nearly the colour of Lavinia's, and her head dressed the same; except that

the wreath was of willow; otherwise they were attired alike.

When they were both seated, the one at her drawing, and the other selecting moss and shells, while the happy Lucinda sat on the turf, amusing herself with her voice and her wheel, the ladies solicited Mr. Bromley to oblige them, by fulfilling the kind promise he had already made, of relating the different incidents of his past life.

Mr. Bromley said, "It would give
"him particular pleasure to gratify their
"desires;

“ desires ; but feared awakening that
“ sensibility which was so apparent an
“ addition to their many other vir-
“ tues.”

However, persuaded by the earnest
entreaties of the fair sisters, he thus
began :

“ My father was a Colonel in the
“ army. He had an independent in-
“ come ; but, being partial to the
“ military life, he purchased a com-
“ mission, and as he was a man much
“ respected, he rose early to this high
“ rank.

“rank. He married a handsome wo-
“man with a large fortune. I was
“the only child of his that lived; and,
“being of a volatile disposition, I
“entreated my father to procure me
“an ensigncy, which he readily com-
“plied with. I soon entered into all
“the gaieties of life, and was so per-
“fectly a fashionable man, that I
“laughed at the idea of being in love.
“The army is generally the means of
“introducing men into the first circles,
“provided they have a taste for high
“life, which was ever my ambition;
“and my father was of the same opi-
“nion.

“ nion. Though I knew many beau-
“ tiful young women, not one had
“ made the slightest impresson on my
“ heart, which induced them to give
“ me the appellation of ‘ The frigid
“ beau.’ I was always attentive and
“ polite to the ladies ; but it was from
“ mere ceremony, and that they should
“ not style me a perfect brute : indeed
“ I began to imagine myself, that I
“ was composed of different materials
“ from mankind in general. I had
“ the greatest veneration for the mar-
“ ried state ; but I had yet found no
“ woman, who could sufficiently en-
“ gage

“ gage my affections, to make her my
“ partner for life ; and I detested the
“ thought of profaning so holy a cere-
“ mony, by perjuring myself in that
“ most sacred house, only from motives
“ of interest ; a practice, alas ! too
“ general, and too little considered
“ by numbers in the world.

“ I began to fear I was not blessed
“ with the finer feelings of sensibility ;
“ and yet I never wanted a tear or a
“ sigh when called forth by the voice
“ of affliction. One day, while I was
“ thus ruminating, and almost totally
“ out

“out of conceit with my own fancied
“insipidity, I was roused from my con-
“templation by the entrance of a Mr.
“Brookland, one of my intimate friends
“in the same regiment I belonged to.
“He said he came to invite me to go
“with him to his father’s house in
“——shire, where, he told me,
“we should be very merry, and have
“dances every night.—‘You will
“then,’ says he, ‘Charles, certainly
“throw off that fence of steel which
“has so long guarded thine obdurate
“heart.’ I smiled, and answered, ‘I
“never wished to shield it from the
“plea-

“ pleasures of domestic society, and
“ hoped that I should soon meet with
“ a woman who could engage my
“ affections.”

“ The next week we set off to
“ Brookland-hall, where ‘ Mirth and
“ all her Crew’ were indeed assembled.
“ It being a spacious mansion, and
“ the owners very hospitable, every
“ kind of diversion was thought of to
“ entertain. There were a number
“ of young people of both sexes in the
“ house, which, besides many daily
“ visitors, made us a very large circle.
“ Though

“ Though there were several handsome
“ women, they appeared all alike in-
“ different to me.

“ Having been at Brookland-hall
“ near a week, and much teased by
“ my companions for my insensibility
“ to the many charms around me, I
“ was at last so vexed with myself, that
“ from a very animated character I
“ became dull and melancholy.

“ One day after dinner a dance was
“ proposed for the evening; but I
“ was so surfeited with a continual
C “ round

“ round of gaiety, that I determined
“ to enjoy my own reflections uninter-
“ rupted. I therefore begged leave
“ of absence that evening, saying, ‘ I
“ wished to execute some particular
“ business.’

“ The evening was pleasant, there-
“ fore I took a long ramble, and return-
“ ed through a gentleman’s park.
“ The country was new to me, and
“ the pleasure of diverting myself with
“ my own meditations, being a satis-
“ faction I could seldom partake of, I

“ had

“ had strolled some miles before I was
“ aware of the distance I had walked.

“ It was an evening in May, and
“ the moon shone most delightfully
“ resplendent, and played between the
“ leaves of the large oaks that sur-
“ rounded the park. Every thing
“ was silent, except the neighbouring
“ village cur, or the dusky beetle hum-
“ ming as he passes the ear of the
“ nightly wanderer.

“ This was a moment fitted for con-
“ templation; ‘ Therefore let me,’ said

“ I, ‘ enjoy that delight which another
“ day I shall not be allowed;’ and I
“ seated myself at the foot of a spread-
“ ing beech, to admire the wonders of
“ that power who is so abundantly in-
“ dulent to us, who are daily coun-
“ ter-acting his commands!

“ While I was thus holding con-
“ verse with myself, a female figure
“ passed me in deep mourning: she
“ walked slowly along, and seemed
“ enrapt in thought. I was more sur-
“ prized than alarmed at so singular a
“ circumstance, and resolved to follow
“ her

“ her at a little distance, so that she
 “ might not observe me.

“ By the light of the moon I could
 “ discover she was an elegant figure,
 “ and appeared to be a person of dis-
 “ tinction.

“ I pursued her very softly, and was
 “ resolved to find out whither she was
 “ going. I perceived she had on her
 “ arm a silver basket,

“ After coming to a dark avenue,
 “ shaded on each side with weeping
 C 3 “ willows,

“ willows, I saw at the end of it one
“ much larger than the rest, under
“ which stood a marble urn.

“ I then conjectured the subject of
“ the fair mourner’s pursuit, and pla-
“ cing myself directly behind the tree,
“ under which this memento of afflic-
“ tion stood, I could see and hear every
“ thing that passed, undiscovered.

“ After kneeling for some minutes,
“ engaged in silent prayer, she rose,
“ and, unlocking the urn, sprinkled
“ its contents with many different es-
fences :

“ fences: after which with a solemn
 “ and audible tone she pronounced
 “ these words :

“ ‘ Shade of my much-honoured pa-
 “ rent! if thou canst deny thyself one
 “ short moment of perfect bliss, look
 “ down with pity on the unhappy Ju-
 “ liana, who can never cease to lament
 “ thee! Heavenly Providence! bestow
 “ on her length of years, to perform
 “ these obsequies to his blessed me-
 “ mory; and may the last worldly
 “ office of the wretched Juliana be to
 “ surround his ashes with the crown of

“ filial love! so will it cast lighter shade
“ over her deepest melancholy; and
“ she will depart to the silent tomb in
“ peace!”

“ When she had shed some tears
“ over the urn, she encircled it with
“ a garland of the most odoriferous
“ flowers, and was returning from her
“ evening duty.

“ As I had the most earnest desire
“ to sympathize with the distresses of
“ the fair sufferer, I crept from my re-
“ tirement, and met her in the avenue.

“ She

“ She started at seeing a stranger in
“ that spot, which before she thought
“ was only visited by herself; but when
“ I had related the cause of my being
“ there, and entreated her forgiveness
“ for my curiosity, she looked with so
“ much condescension, affability, and
“ graceful dignity, she smiled, like an
“ April sun-beam, so sweetly through
“ her tears, that my flinty heart yield-
“ ed itself a willing captive to the
“ beauteous Juliana.

C 5

“ Having

“ Having given her the short annals
“ of my little history, and told her
“ from whence I came, she said, she
“ had been well acquainted with Mr.
“ Brookland’s family, and did not
“ question the veracity of my account.
“ ‘ My poor father,’ said Juliana, ‘ died
“ in Paris, where he went for a short
“ time to see an old relation; and it
“ was with much difficulty I could ob-
“ tain the ashes you have seen me la-
“ menting over, which are deposited
“ in that urn.’

“ She

“ She added, ‘ She had no other near
“ relation; her mother died in child-
“ birth of her; and she had neither
“ brother or sister.’ ”

“ She observed, ‘ That what gave
“ her most uneasiness, next to her ir-
“ reparable loss, was, that the spot
“ which she had been bred up in would
“ revert to a man who bore an infam-
“ ous character.’ ”

“ And that, ‘ A few short months’
“ would deprive her of the only thing

“ in life that could give her satisfaction ;
“ and those walks, which ever brought
“ to her mind some pleasing conversa-
“ tions she had enjoyed with her dear
“ father, she must for ever be torn
“ from. Recollection’, added Juliana,
“ ‘ in our happier moments almost re-
“ news the luxury of former delights ;
“ but’, continued she (and the most
“ majestic smile beamed upon her
“ countenance), ‘ one inestimable gem
“ no one can deprive me of, the last
“ earthly remains of my valued pa-
“ rent.’

“ This

“ This reflection seemed in some degree to compose her shattered spirits, and by this time we had reached her mansion. As it was late, and some fleecy clouds obscured the radiance of the moon, Juliana requested an attendant might accompany me to the hall.

“ When the moment of departure arrived, a something I had never felt cast a gloom over my imagination, and an involuntary sigh escaped me; it was the most reluctant adieu I

“ had ever uttered; nor could I take
“ my leave, till the angelic Juliana
“ had given me permission to visit her
“ again.

“ As I returned, the road which
“ before I so much admired seemed
“ now rugged and uncomfortable, and
“ the nearer I approached the hall, the
“ more difficulties strewed themselves
“ in my way.

“ When I arrived, I found the in-
“ habitants very joyous, and nothing
“ was heard but music and dancing.

“ Not

“ Not in a state of mind to partake
“ of the gaieties of life, I retired to my
“ own apartment, where the scene I
“ had just quitted, and the present
“ one, formed so striking a contrast,
“ that it furnished me with many dif-
“ ferent ideas; but I preferred the so-
“ ciety of the pensive Juliana to all the
“ vain amusements an insipid world
“ could afford me.

“ Full of a thousand various hopes,
“ and fears, but not one estranged
“ from the mistress of my heart, I en-
“ deavoured

“ deavoured to take a short repose,
“ and determined the following day to
“ revisit the fair object of my regard.

“ When I was (though reluctantly)
“ obliged to attend the next morning
“ at breakfast, every one raillied me on
“ my absenting myself the preceding
“ evening, and tried to tantalize me,
“ by describing the pleasures of it in
“ the most lively colours. Little did
“ they imagine what a poor effect it
“ would have upon me, and how much
“ I would give to escape such another
“ evening,

“ evening, could I pass it like the for-
“ mer.

“ Several sorts of amusements were
“ proposed, such as walking, fishing,
“ riding, &c. and each party said with
“ a smile, ‘ That if I would promise
“ not to offend again, they would ad-
“ mit me.’

“ I thanked them; but said, ‘ I could
“ make no such declaration, therefore
“ would not trespass on their civility;’
“ and added, ‘ that having some affairs
“ of importance to transact, I desired
“ they

“ they would look on me as a very un-
“ certain attendant on their pursuits.”

“ They knew I was once very vo-
“ latile, and were all amazingly asto-
“ nished at the sudden change.

“ Among the gentlemen, who were
“ most interested in my welfare, and
“ who, though younger, had ever been
“ my particular friends, was Captain
“ Henry Mellish.”

At the name of Mellish, Miranda
turned pale; the rose-bud withered on
her

her cheek, and she looked like the modest snow-drop on which the early dew hangs pendant.

At length she raised her drooping head, and exclaimed, "Alas, my Henry!
"and can it be possible I now behold
"the friend of the much-loved owner
"of my heart! But I will, I must listen
"to your story; therefore begone, Re-
"flection, thou busy tormentor, thou
"dismal phantom haunting the afflic-
"ted mind! would I could forget every
"thing but Lavinia and my cottage!
"Though, alas! I fear, no time can
"wear

“ wear away the impression while Memory keeps her seat. Pardon me,
“ Mr. Bromley, for this digression;
“ which has, like all distresses, brought
“ some good in its train; though
“ before I had no doubts of the truth
“ of the interesting history you are relating, yet this confirms it entirely,
“ and I shall have the additional pleasure of conversing on the excellencies
“ of the unfortunate Henry.”

She said, “ She had frequently
“ heard him speak of the worthy Bromley;
“ but as a man of the strictest
“ integrity.”

“ integrity he had never divulged one
“ incident of his fate.”

Miranda then intreated Mr. Bromley
to proceed, saying, “ From the first
“ appearance of him she was particu-
“ larly anxious to hear his story, though
“ she could not then discover the
“ cause.”

Mr. Bromley said, “ Though he
“ was concerned at having awakened
“ the remembrance of woe, yet he was
“ happy he could prove to them that
“ he was relating the strictest truth,
“ and

“and should continue his melancholy
“recital with much greater satisfaction
“to himself.”

Lavinia dropt a sympathetic tear for her friend; but in a short time they were more composed, and Mr. Bromley thus renewed his story.

“Mr. Mellish was much concerned
“at the sudden gravity which had taken
“such full possession of me, and
“begged that I would accompany him
“in a walk; saying he had excused
“himself likewise from joining any
“party

“ party that morning. While we were
“ deliberating which way we should
“ go, we heard the following conver-
“ sation in the next room.

“ ‘ What!’ says Miss Flirtilla, ‘ are
“ we to be deprived of two beaux this
“ morning, and the smartest of the
“ company also? I had pictured to my-
“ self a charming ride on horseback;
“ but these men of fashion, as they call
“ themselves, never know their own
“ minds two minutes together: one
“ moment they make us believe they
“ are dying for us, and the next they
“ behave

“ behave like bears; and yet we think
“ life insupportable without them.”

“ ‘ Oh!’ says Miss Vainlove, ‘ they
“ only do it to try if we have any re-
“ gard for them; did you observe how
“ earnestly Mellish looked at me when
“ he proposed a walk with Bromley?
“ Oh, my dear, you do not know their
“ way so well as I do; you have not
“ left the deplorable country above
“ two years; it is impossible you should
“ know any thing of the tonish scenes of
“ life that have but just quitted the
“ shady groves, the purling streams,
“ and

“and tinkling sheep-bells. Come,
“Maria, let us take our ride together,
“and boast of it as the pleafantest we
“ever had; that will teaze them.

“During this modern chit-chat,
“which we could not help listening to,
“as it concerned us, we were deeply
“interested in matters of much greater
“importance to our peace than Miss
“Flirtilla or Miss Amelia Vainlove;
“and we sallied forth to enjoy a *tête*
“*à tête*, unmolested by fuch fashiona-
“ble dialogues.

D

“I

“ I entrusted my friend with the important secret of my heart. He much approved the excellence of my taste ; and said, ‘ the character of Juliana was most exemplary ; and, if report might be credited, she was equally beautiful as amiable.’

“ He told me, ‘ She was daughter of the late Sir William Somerville, a person as much distinguished for every valuable quality as Juliana. He died a few months ago abroad ; and I have frequently heard,’ added Henry,
“ ‘ she

“ ‘ she is inconsolable for his loss. I
“ assure you, Charles, I have great
“ reason to believe you are the first
“ stranger she has conversed with since
“ his death. Having been thus fa-
“ voured, let me advise you to lose no
“ time in declaring your sentiments
“ to her. She is very young, and has
“ lived in the most secluded manner;
“ therefore is most likely without any
“ engagement. That friend, who can
“ sympathize and pity our misfortunes,
“ has a just claim to some regard; and,
“ with a mind of sensibility like Juli-
“ ana’s, it is generally heightened.

“ Sigh not then at the faint shadow of
“ disappointment; believe me, her soft
“ nature is easily won upon, and I can
“ almost venture to pronounce you
“ happy.’

“ ‘ I have only this material objec-
“ tion,’ answered I, ‘ the recent death
“ of her father; but as my stay here
“ will not be very long, and she will
“ soon quit her present mansion, I may
“ never again be blessed with a sight
“ of her.’

“ This

“ This reflection left no alternative ;
“ and I promised Henry to see the fair
“ mourner early in the afternoon, and

“ I went to the park as soon as I
“ could be released from the society I
“ was engaged in.

“ When I arrived there, a domestic
“ I had never seen told me his lady
“ admitted no company ; but begged
“ he might inform her my name ; which
“ I readily acquiesced in, as a mixture

“ of hope and vanity led me to imagine I should obtain an interview.

“ ‘ Surely,’ said I, ‘ she cannot shut out the voice of sympathy; it is contrary to the fair Juliana’s nature to do so.’

“ I determined, however, to be very slow in my departure. After strolling round the flower borders, and pretending to admire every thing worthy inspection, though knowing whether they were weeds or shrubs, so much was I lost in thought,
“ I

“ I involuntarily gathered a sprig of
“ myrtle, which I considered a fortu-
“ nate circumstance, as it was the most
“ lasting memento I could then obtain
“ of the beautiful Juliana.

“ I was sauntering away, absorbed
“ in the deepest melancholy, when, to
“ my inexpressible delight (and the
“ sudden transition almost overpowered
“ me), the same attendant desired I
“ would return. He said, ‘ When
“ Miss Somerville knew who I was,
“ she gave orders for me to be admit-
“ ted.’

“ This particular indulgence ani-
“ mated me with new courage, and with
“ hasty steps I proceeded to the apart-
“ ment of Juliana.

“ She was seated on a sofa of white
“ satin, in a magnificent saloon, fur-
“ nished in the most splendid manner.
“ On a table before her, were a number
“ of different ingredients for painting,
“ and she appeared to have been co-
“ pying the portrait of a gentleman.

“ When

“ When I entered, she was sitting
“ in a pensive attitude, leaning her
“ cheek upon her hand. As I ap-
“ proached, I fancied the clouds of sor-
“ row, which hung so heavily on her
“ beauteous brow, seemed to disperse ;
“ and the serenity of satisfaction added
“ lustre to her eye. She was the figure
“ of Patience surrounded with all her
“ meek-eyed attendants, the Virtues
“ and the Graces.

“ Thus looked the lovely Juliana!

“ But, when she spoke, her sentiments

“ were so just, elegant, and so full of
“ resignation, that a heart of adamant
“ could not have remained unmoved;
“ much less mine, which was already
“ chained with everlasting regard.

“ She told me, ‘ She could never
“ forget the kind sensibility I had shewn
“ for her affliction. Her mind,’ she
“ said, ‘ was much more calm; for
“ till the last evening her sole com-
“ forter was Religion; that,’ she own-
“ ed, ‘ was a never-failing resource:
“ but the additional solace of a friend
“ was an infinite relief in sorrow.’ She
“ ob-

“ observed, ‘ the only amusement she
 “ could partake of, was being occu-
 “ pied in any thing which related to
 “ her dear parent, and she had been em-
 “ ploying herself in drawing his re-
 “ semblance from a picture, which was
 “ the greatest likeness.’

“ This information was an infinite
 “ comfort to my mind, as I dreaded lest
 “ the portrait was of some favoured lo-
 “ ver. Many times was I ready to
 “ throw myself at her feet, and declare
 “ my passion; and as often did my
 “ resolution fail me.

“ I assured her, ‘ that, if I could be
“ of any service to her, I entreated she
“ would command me; that the plea-
“ sure I received in her presence was
“ of so great consequence to my peace,
“ that, unless she would bless me with
“ her hand, my future misery must be
“ inevitable, and I hoped my continu-
“ ance of affection might be deserving
“ of some small return from the only
“ object who could ever possess my in-
“ variable regard.’ I solicited a thou-
“ sand pardons for my temerity, ‘ which,’
“ I said, ‘ I could not have had the
“ pre-

“ presumption to discover but at the
“ shrine of mildness, gentleness, and
“ pity. And now,’ I exclaimed, ‘ most
“ inestimable fair-one, pronounce my
“ sentence; it must either be the hap-
“ piest or most miserable; there can
“ be no mediocrity.’

“ That face, which was before the
“ seat of calm tranquillity, and always
“ reflected the inward sensations of the
“ heart, now underwent the various
“ changes of surprize and contempla-
“ tion.

“ After

“ After a silent pause of some minutes, and to me they appeared hours, the lovely Juliana thus accosted me.

“ ‘ And would you, Mr. Bromley, resign all the luxuries and allurements of a gay world, to live amidst the shades of retirement with the unfortunate Juliana? It is true, you are the friend of sorrow; but can the human mind, prone as it is to the love of pleasure, give up all its delights to live sequestered with an
“ unhappy

“ unhappy woman? When you peti-
“ tion my hand, you are not aware of
“ the gloom that will encircle it. Were
“ I possessed of millions, I could never
“ enter into the ideal charms of a gaudy
“ world. No, Mr. Bromley, you lit-
“ tle imagine what you request; think
“ no more then of the wretched Juliana,
“ who will pass her future days sacred
“ to her God, and in living so that
“ she may at that awful period, when
“ life’s feeble lamp is fluttering in the
“ socket, depart in peace with the
“ happy

“ happy idea of again beholding her
“ much loved father.’

“ ‘ If there are no other obstacles
“ to divide me from the empress of my
“ heart,’ answered I with emotion,
“ ‘ then am I blessed indeed ! Think
“ not so meanly of me, fairest Juliana,
“ as to imagine when I addressed you
“ it was to be endowed with riches and
“ magnificence; permit me to unde-
“ ceive you, and believe me when I
“ declare, I would rather pass my days
“ in the utmost indigence with you,
“ than in a palace, deprived of your
“ plea-

“ pleasing society. Whatever manner
“ of life you may chuse will be a lux-
“ ury to me. Be candid enough then
“ to fix my destiny; the fear of lo-
“ sing you has rendered me thus abrupt;
“ but hearts, like yours, are full of
“ forgiveness. Oblige me then, most
“ excellent of your sex, with such a
“ reply as may compleat my ardent
“ desires.”

“ ‘ Diffimulation,’ replied the ami-
“ able Juliana, ‘ has ever been my aver-
“ sion; neither does female delicacy in
“ this instance require it. I will freely
“ own

“ own to you, that your friendly consolation has been a powerful advocate in your favour; and the world speaks so largely in your praise, that I have only the fear of making you unhappy from the retired manner I mean to spend my future days. Gaiety was never agreeable to me, and now it is still a more unwelcome guest; therefore, if you are not perfectly certain such a life would be pleasing to you, endeavour to forget the melancholy Juliana.”

“ The

“ The extasies of joy I felt are better conceived than described. When I had visited her for some months, and constantly assured her, that I must be wretched without her, the virtuous Juliana promised to bless me with her hand.

“ As the mourning for her father was not ended, she desired our marriage might be deferred some little time, for she said, ‘ Though she could never cease to lament her loss, yet she would try to compose her mind,

“ mind, that she might undergo the so-
“ lemn change with some degree of
“ serenity, and be more deserving my
“ regard.”

“ I immediately went in pursuit of
“ some situation which I thought would
“ be pleasing to Juliana. As she was
“ to reside in the family mansion the
“ first year after her father’s death, I
“ left her comfortably situated, and
“ took my leave of Brookland-hall.

“ The first thing I had to do, was to
“ acquaint my father with the affair,
“ for

“ for without his consent Juliana would
 “ not agree to be mine.

“ It was a trying moment in which
 “ I was compelled to quit the idol of
 “ my soul. She too was affected; but
 “ affliction was so habitual to her, that
 “ she seemed almost superior to it.
 “ Alas! had this ever been the case, I
 “ had now been happy.

“ My father, always ready to in-
 “ dulge me, instantly consented to our
 “ union; saying, ‘ He was glad to
 “ find I had shewn some taste.’

“ I

" I then went in search of a habita-
" tion which would be pleasing to
" Juliana. At length, with much
" difficulty, I found one which I
" thought she would like.

" It was a small house, situated in a
" romantic vale; there was a beautiful
" garden, at the end of which was
" a little grove, where I fancied Ju-
" liana might place the urn of her
" father.

" I fixed upon this spot for our
" happy

“ happy abode ; and Juliana was much
“ pleased with the description of it.

“ Nothing, worthy remark, hap-
“ pened during the intermediate space
“ till the day arrived which was to
“ make me supremely blessed by the
“ hand of the beautiful Juliana.

“ My father gave me a handsome
“ income; and I sold out of the army,
“ that I might never be absent from my
“ lovely wife. It was settled, that our
“ nuptials should be celebrated before
“ she quitted the seat of her nativity;
“ after

“ after which we were to retire to our
“ little dwelling.

“ When the happy morning came,
“ my angelic bride was the picture of
“ rustic simplicity and innocence. She
“ had changed her mournful vestments
“ for the purest white. She went
“ through the ceremony with the most
“ heroic fortitude; but, when the car-
“ riage appeared, that was to take her
“ for ever from her parental abode, she
“ could not refrain shewing part of the
“ inward grief she so severely felt.

“ “ For-

“ ‘ Forgive me, my dearest Charles,’
“ said she, ‘ the ungrateful return I
“ make your fervency of affection. Be
“ assured mine is not lessened by the
“ tears I shed on the day I ought to
“ have dedicated to you alone; but,
“ alas! the Lethean cup can never
“ reach my lips: however, I will use
“ every argument of reason I am en-
“ dowed with to banish past reflections,
“ and endeavour to disperse them by
“ studying the present duties I owe my
“ husband.’

E

“ I

“ I thanked her most tenderly and
“ assured her that my first pleasure
“ would ever be to make her happy.

“ Juliana was much delighted with
“ our little retirement, and especially
“ the grove in which the urn was care-
“ fully placed.

“ Soon after our marriage, I had
“ the misfortune to lose my father. He
“ left me his whole property, which
“ was considerable; but riches were
“ of little use to me, who had already
“ such

“ such a treasure in my sweet Juliana.
 “ Having no desire for grandeur, we
 “ did not wish to excel in the showish
 “ scenes of life.

“ The first year after our union,
 “ Juliana presented me with a beautiful
 “ little girl. She was a great favou-
 “ rite, and still continued to be more
 “ so, as being the only child we ever
 “ had. This sweet infant was the
 “ means of restoring the shattered spirits
 “ of Juliana, as it took up much of her
 “ attention; and, with a few social
 “ friends, we looked no farther into

“the world for additional happiness.
“But, alas! that bliss we enjoyed was
“too exquisite! It is not here below,
“as I again experience, even in the
“virtuous sisters Cottage, we are to
“taste felicity unmixed with pain.”

Here Mr. Bromley fetched a deep sigh, and with much difficulty proceeded.

“We had been married,” said he, “about four years, when one evening, one unfortunate evening, as our little Louisa (for so we called her) was walking with her nurse,
“they

“ they were met by two men and a wo-
 “ man, who were Gypsies. One of the
 “ men dragged the nurse into a wood,
 “ and held her while the others carried
 “ off our dear little girl. He then left
 “ her, almost distracted, to bring home
 “ the melancholy story. Judge, ami-
 “ able fair ones, the situation of our
 “ minds, and particularly that of the
 “ lovely Juliana already so much de-
 “ pressed by recent affliction.

“ We made every research invention
 “ could dictate, but without effect.
 “ Had death deprived us of her, we must

“ have submitted to the divine will,
“ and have chased away our own
“ anxieties, with the thought of her
“ inconceivable happiness. But this
“ was a shock the wounded mind of her
“ fond mother could not sustain. As
“ the pale lily bent with the northern
“ blast, she drooped her languid head
“ never to raise it more.

“ At first, the most violent fits suc-
“ ceeded each other, without inter-
“ mission; but, when calm contempla-
“ tion began to take its gentler seat, a
“ slow fever seized her frame, and, like
“ some

“some tender shrub struck with the
“piercing lightning, so she withered
“in her bloom.

“One evening, after she had been
“paying the last mournful duties over
“the urn of her father, she called me to
“her, and spoke these bitter words :
“ ‘ This, my dear Charles,’ said she,
“ ‘ is another of the most trying mo-
“ments of my life, in which I must
“pain the worthy mind of my much-
“loved husband, by telling him, that
“a few short weeks will deprive him
“of me for ever. For ever ! did I say ?

E 4

“ no !

“ no! that is too dismal an idea for
“ humanity to support! a few fleeting
“ years, my worthy Charles, and we
“ shall meet again in those blest regions,
“ where sorrow and afflictions are no
“ more. This last stroke has been too
“ severe for my shaken spirits to sur-
“ mount, and I am sinking to the grave,
“ which has no terrors but those of
“ parting from my much-valued hus-
“ band. My poor Louisa’s fate is in
“ the hands of that Power who has
“ disposed of her according to his own
“ wisdom; and, though harsh the de-
“ cree, I murmur not: would I had
“ suf-

“ sufficient philosophy to overcome it !
“ I say this, my dearest Charles, to
“ prepare you for that event, which in
“ a little time must take place. I have
“ a request to make, which I am sure
“ you will fulfill ; place me near the
“ urn of my father, and preserve that,
“ as a relic, sacred to the memory of
“ your Juliana. When I am no more,
“ let me advise you to travel ; variety
“ will be the most soothing balm to
“ your wounded mind. Sink not into
“ despondency ; remember we ought
“ to bear our trials with patience and
“ fortitude, knowing they are sent us

“ for some good purpose; it is one of
“ the errors your unhappy wife is
“ guilty of; but though she has sur-
“ mounted the first misfortune, and
“ submits with resignation to the second,
“ ‘ yet human nature will be human
“ nature still.’ However, my dear
“ Charles, let examples of this kind be
“ productive of a useful lesson to your-
“ self, and in all distresses be comforted
“ and be submissive. May my weakness
“ then prove a warning to you! so will
“ good spring out of my unfortunate
“ fate, and with that reflection shall I
“ de-

“ depart to the silent tomb with serene-
 “ nity.”

“ This conversation, though spoken
 “ in the mildest and most placid tone,
 “ was like daggers to my heart; but I
 “ endeavoured to conceal the acuteness
 “ of my grief, that I might not add to
 “ the pains of Juliana. I promised to
 “ use every effort to comply with her
 “ desires, respecting my future peace;
 “ but begged she would try to subdue
 “ the melancholy which overshadowed
 “ her mind. She said, ‘ for my sake, she
 “ would use every means for her reco-

“very.’ But though change of scene
“and each method that could be con-
“ceived were tried, it had no effect;
“and the spotless Juliana took her
“leave of this chequered world,
“without a sigh but for her husband
“and her child!

“I was so overpowered with afflic-
“tion, that I instantly lost every faculty
“of reason, and had an attendant
“constantly to watch me. After some
“time passed in this manner, my good
“friend Mellish, hearing the deplora-
“ble state I was in, came to me; and
“by

“ by his continued assiduities at last
“ brought me to my senses. He stayed
“ with me near two months; and as I
“ promised to travel, and seemed more
“ composed, he left me. When I re-
“ covered my reason, my first care was
“ to have a mausoleum erected close to
“ the urn of Sir William Somerville;
“ and, by the last request of my lovely
“ Juliana, I ordered her remains to be
“ conveyed there, which, during my
“ state of insensibility, had been in-
“ terred in a vault near the church.

“ It

" It was many weeks after Mellish
 " was gone, before I could summon
 " sufficient resolution to quit the spot
 " which contained the only remains of
 " every thing I valued upon earth; but
 " leaving some careful domestics at the
 " Grove (for so was our little habita-
 " tion called), I departed, hoping in
 " some degree to chase away the dreary
 " gloom which hung over my head.

" My first business was to purchase
 " the Grove, that it might always be
 " sacred to the ever-honoured memory
 I " of

“of my dear Juliana and her father;
“and be ready to receive the remains
“of the unfortunate Bromley, when-
“ever it pleased his maker to recal
“him hence.

“Many different excursions did I
“make, and for several years equally
“unpleased with all, till heaven directed
“my steps to the sweet Cottage of
“Friendship. And thus, ladies,” said
Mr. Bromley, “ends the woeful hi-
“story of my past life. What the fu-
“ture pages may contain, is safely
“enrolled in the book of fate.”

Miranda

Miranda and Lavinia shed many tears over this recital, for which they expressed themselves much indebted to Mr. Bromley; and they declared, "It would be their greatest joy, to do every thing in their power to smooth the ruffled brow of recent sorrow; and, as he seemed so delighted with that quiet retreat, hoped he would pass as much of his time there as was convenient to him."

He thanked them most sincerely, and said, "He should be infinitely
" gra-

“ gratified to spend as many of his days
“ near their peaceful Cottage as he
“ could spare from his once pleasant
“ abode; but,” added he, “ I cannot
“ entirely quit that place, which was
“ once so dear to me, and must ever
“ be so, while it contains the ashes of
“ the charming Juliana.”

He said, “ It would be a great satis-
“ faction to him could he obtain leave
“ to erect a small hermitage or sort of
“ Gothic temple near them, so that
“ they might alternately enjoy each
“ other’s society; but if there was a
“ pos-

“possibility of a favour of that kind
“being granted, he must apply to
“them to solicit it.”

Lavinia answered, “She did not
“doubt such an indulgence being per-
“mitted; for as the lord of the woods
“was famed for benevolence and hos-
“pitality, and had already most gene-
“rously permitted them to reside there,
“they had reason to believe he would
“favour a second request, when it
“could be the means of relieving a vir-
“tuous heart, worn down by pecu-
“liar distress.”

Full

Full of the ideal pleasure he should receive by living part of the year near the amiable friends, he endeavoured to draw a veil over the late afflicting narrative; but it was of too fine a texture, to prevent his seeing, in the strongest colours, the reverse of pleasure and pain he had experienced at the Grove.

By the particular entreaties of Mr. Bromley, the ladies promised to relate their melancholy histories; but desired to defer it till another time, that they
might

might amuse him better the remainder of that day, which had brought with it so much agitation to his wearied spirits.

Miranda and Lavinia solicited Mr. Bromley to partake of their rustic repast. He assured them, "Nothing could please him so well ; and that, if he was lucky enough to obtain a retirement near them, he should follow their example in every thing, as far as it was in his power."

Mr.

Mr. Bromley's surprize was infinitely heightened, when Lucinda informed them every thing was ready. He thought he had seen all the apartments, and, as no preparations were making, he was much astonished when Lucinda said their repast was prepared.

"Now, Mr. Bromley," said Miranda, "I will shew you our dining-room; it is not furnished in the modern style." Saying this, she led him through a serpentine lime-walk, at the end of which stood a grotto: the
vari-

varieties of shells and moss which ornamented it formed an elegant and natural contrast, and the limes in blossom yielded the most fragrant perfume, while the thickness of their shades afforded a most grateful and refreshing coolness.

When they entered, there was a table spread with many fruits and vegetables the season produced, and arranged with the neatest simplicity. Over their heads hung a wreath of the most beautiful and odoriferous flowers, which Miranda informed Mr. Bromley was

was daily renewed by the good Lucinda; and she called it "the Crown of Friendship, entwined by the hand of Gratitude and Affection."

Mr. Bromley declared this to be the most comfortable meal he had ever partook of. Miranda set on some of the richest wines, "which," she said, "were made by their own hands, and composed of cowslips, grapes, and apricots."

While they were refreshing themselves, they needed not a band of arti-

artificial music; they had nature's melody, so superior to every manœuvre of art; the thrush, the linnæa, and the black-bird, entertained them with their harmonious notes, while the melancholy dove, with its plaintive murmurs, formed a *penseroso* to this enchanting concert. Miranda said, they always sat in the grotto during the heat of the day, and the lamb and the little dog never failed to accompany them.

They were much amused with the account Mr. Bromley gave of seeing them at play, and the reflections it

occa-

occasioned. They conversed on various topics till the evening approached; when Miranda proposed a walk, as she wished to shew Mr. Bromley all the beauties of their charming situation.

They went to the bottom of the hill*, and sauntered along the banks of the Thames for some distance, till they came to a bason of water, from which appeared once to have flowed a beautiful cascade; it seemed to have been raised by art, but nature had so far gained the ascendancy that it was infi-

* This description is taken from reality.

F nitely

nitely superior to any thing the workman could execute. "Like the world," said Lavinia, "even Dame Nature seems partial to her own inventions, and she has led the gliding rill from its wonted source; and, falling between two venerable trees, renders it a most romantic scene. Ever murmuring, yet ever pleasing, it swells upon the evening breeze, and reaches the Cottage of Friendship."

Mr. Bromley said, "He supposed they passed many hours near that delightful spring;" but they told him,

him, "It was so much visited by the
"gayer world, that they seldom strolled
"so far; and indeed they could not
"desire more beauties than what sur-
"rounded their Cottage."

When they returned, Mr. Bromley
saw the fair sisters safely lodged in
their rural dwelling, and departed for
the night, after promising to spend
the next day with them.

When Mr. Bromley again became
one of the busy multitude, what a
change did he experience! he almost

fancied himself in the situation of our first father, when deprived of the delights of Paradise; but the pleasing reflection, that he was not totally banished, in some measure smoothed his pillow, and he slept in peace.

When the lovely sisters had parted from their worthy friend, they sat for some hours contemplating the unexpected event of that day, which had brought so agreeable an addition to their happy dwelling. "How complicated," exclaimed Miranda, "are the incidents of our fate! and how
"won-

“ wonderful the ordinations of Provi-
“ dence! I was sufficiently blessed in
“ my Lavinia; but to have the valua-
“ ble friend of my ever dear Henry
“ restored to me, is a bliss I never
“ deserved, or could possibly hope
“ for.” Lavinia too expressed her
gratitude for this added luxury, and
said, “ Some inward monitor whis-
“ pered, that, if they studied to admi-
“ nister consolation to their afflicted
“ friend, he would prove a lasting
“ source of comfort to them so long
“ as they lived.”

Engaged in these pleasing reflections, the hour of repose would have arrived too soon, had they not recollected that the approaching morning would give them another interview with their friend; and they retired, equally desirous as Mr. Bromley for the returning morrow.

The next day as Mr. Bromley returned to the Cottage, his ear caught the sound of a flagelet, playing the wild and unskilful notes of an untaught performer; however, they were not
un-

unpleasing, and he listened with some attention and surprize, especially as the music seemed to proceed from the Cottage, and he knew of no other inhabitant residing there but the amiable friends.

As he approached the happy dwelling, he perceived a young man, habited as a shepherd, sitting under a hedge, in the field in which were Miranda and Lavinia's sheep. Though the music had ceased before Mr. Bromley appeared in view, he instantly conjectured from whence it came.

When he arrived at the Cottage, the sisters were particularly rejoiced to see him, because, they said, "They had
" the happy tidings to communicate,
" that Mr. Bromley had free permission
" to build a small habitation for himself." He was much delighted with this information; and after thanking the fair ladies for their kind attention to his wishes, he assured them he would lose no time to have it completed.

Mr. Bromley asked Miranda, "If
" she had heard the music which re-
" sounded

“founded along the hill as he was
“walking to her Cottage.”

She said, “It was the shepherd,
“who had attended the flock since
“their retreat from society;” and she
observed, “He was equally grateful as
“Lucinda. Similarity,” said Mi-
randa, “has grown into the truest
“affection, and so high is their attach-
“ment for each other, that Lucinda
“will sit for hours spinning on the
“grass, in the hottest part of the day,
“to be gratified with the sight of her
“lover at the further part of the mea-

“dow, rather than be seated in the
“shade to be entirely deprived of it;
“and in return he entertains her with
“his pastoral music. Their parents
“are poor, but very industrious, and
“they have thought them both too
“young to marry; but at last,” said
Miranda, “we have obtained the con-
“sent of Edwin’s relations, and there-
“fore hope to gain the permission of
“Lucinda’s: If we should,” said she,
“you are just become acquainted with
“us in time, Mr. Bromley, to be the
“spectator of a rural wedding.”

Mr.

Mr. Bromley observed, " Nothing
" could give him more heart-felt de-
" light, than to see two faithful lovers
" made completely happy." He begged the ladies would fix upon the spot on which he should erect his little Hermitage; and they chose one about a quarter of a mile from their own abode. It was upon the summit of the hill: the back of it was shaded with evergreens, and the front beautified with here and there a clump of various smaller kinds of trees, which, growing in

vistas, admitted a view of the finest country fancy can paint to the most brilliant imagination.

The building was not large, therefore it was soon finished. It consisted of only two apartments: the roof was of thatch, and the sides composed of roots and flints, the same as the Cottage; and, to have a more ornamental appearance, it was formed something like a Gothic Temple, or ancient hermitage. His only garden was a few shrubs, which grew in an irregular manner, and were of his own planting. Mr. Bromley had no attendant; for there
were

were few people they could trust to enter into those happy retirements.

Miranda observed, "That, like
" spies from an enemy's country, they
" might soon overturn the peaceful go-
" vernment of their little empire;
" therefore she entreated Mr. Bromley
" would partake with them his daily
" food, and Lucinda and her Edwin
" might attend on their limited wants."

In a short time Mr. Bromley's rustic dwelling was completed; for there were no splendid embellishments to
pro-

prolong the artists studies; and it was soon ready to receive the worthy owner.

As they were all very ardent in their endeavours to make Mr. Bromley's new situation agreeable to him; on that account all thoughts of Lucinda's marriage were deferred, till every thing was properly arranged at the Hermitage.

One evening as the amiable party were amusing themselves by conversing on various subjects, Mr. Bromley said,

“ He

“ He would now petition for the favour
“ he had been promised of hearing the
“ ladies histories; and should be infinitely obliged, if one of them would
“ indulge him.”

Miranda sighed: she said, “ It
“ was a melancholy task; but, as it
“ could not be more so than the
“ distressing truths he had related of
“ himself, she was bound in gratitude
“ to comply with his desires; and Lavinia in her turn would recite her
“ troubles.” The fair sister bowed assent; and Miranda, having wiped off
an

an involuntary tear, sacred to remembrance, thus began.

“ My father was a clergyman, of
 “ small fortune, in ———shire: my
 “ real name is Anna Maria Waters;
 “ but, that we might not be so readily
 “ discovered, Lavinia and myself have
 “ chosen fictitious ones. My father
 “ died very suddenly; and, unhappily
 “ for me, without making any will. I
 “ have one brother a few years younger
 “ than myself.

“ My

“ My mother was a woman ill-cal-
 “ culated to render a domestic life
 “ comfortable: she was fond of gai-
 “ ties she could not afford, and of
 “ continual dissipation, which is not
 “ becoming the Mother of a family,
 “ especially where there is not a suffi-
 “ ciency to purchase such vain amuse-
 “ ments.

“ My father, who was a very wor-
 “ thy character, was much hurt at her
 “ proceedings; but she was not of a
 “ temper to hear advice. This occasi-
 “ oned

“oned continual pangs in the breast
“of my father, and in all probability
“shortened his life.

“I was never of a volatile disposition,
“and disliked the round of insipid
“company we were daily engaged in;
“for which reason I became the aversion
“of my mother, and indeed my
“brother was not a favourite: as soon
“as she possibly could, she sent him to
“sea. What fortune my father had
“was in money; therefore my mother
“took possession of it, as there was
“no will.

“Scarcely

“ Scarcely had my father been dead
“ two years, before she married again,
“ and had several children by her se-
“ cond husband. Only picture to
“ yourself, Mr. Bromley, the situa-
“ tion I was in, losing the only parent
“ who had any love for me; my poor
“ brother gone, perhaps, for ever,
“ and me dependant on such a mother
“ for subsistence. The law was a poor
“ resource, and it was a melancholy
“ prospect on every side; but, alas!
“ had I seen all the misfortunes that
“ were to attend me, it would have
“ been

“ been still more dreadful ! But the
“ good Providence, in pity to our
“ weak natures, conceals from us our
“ approaching destiny ! My only com-
“ fort was in the friendship of my ever
“ dear *Jemima* (for that is the real
“ name of *Lavinia*). We lived near
“ each other, and could lighten our
“ distresses by unbofoming and sharing
“ them together. My father-in-law
“ was much more tender of me than
“ my real parent ; but he was a man
“ of the world, and had a very mode-
“ rate degree of sensibility ; what he
“ possessed was chiefly confined to his
“ own

“ own children; there was little to
“ spare for the unfortunate Anna.

“ As I was fond of retirement, I
“ used frequently to pass many hours,
“ reading or working, under some tree
“ or secluded shade, where I might ru-
“ minate on my misfortunes without
“ interruption. For this purpose, I had
“ placed a small seat, by the margin
“ of a rivulet, which ran along the
“ banks of one my father’s meadows.
“ Some large elms, together with other
“ smaller trees, formed a kind of leafy
“ alcove over my head; whilst the roses
“ and

“ and woodbines, that entwined them,
“ rendered it a truly romantic little
“ spot.

“ Here I usually passed my days
“ during the summer, and frequently
“ my friend Jemima accompanied me.
“ One morning, when I was particu-
“ larly oppressed with sorrow, I retired
“ alone to my favourite seat; and, too
“ much overcome with grief to read
“ or work, I burst into tears. While
“ I was weeping, I was suddenly rou-
“ sed from my distress by the sound of
“ foot-steps. I felt much alarmed, as
“ it

“ it was the first time any one had ap-
“ proached my quiet retreat: but how
“ infinitely was I agitated and confused
“ when I beheld a handsome young
“ officer, in a military uniform!

“ He made a very polite apology,
“ and said, ‘ That being a stranger,
“ he hoped, would sufficiently atone
“ for his apparent rudeness, as he did
“ not know that was a private walk.’
“ I was so hurt he should see me in
“ such affliction, that I could make no
“ proper reply. He saw my embarrass-
“ ment, and immediately retired, with-
“ out

“ out putting me to the pain of study-
“ ing a speech I was then incapable of.
“ I thought he seemed to pity me; and
“ I fancied I could discover he wished
“ to become acquainted with my for-
“ row. I reproached myself for not
“ behaving with more propriety, and
“ hoped I might have another oppor-
“ tunity to remedy my ill manners.
“ Alas! I little knew it was not only
“ a desire of appearing polite! There
“ was a something more which soon
“ after discovered itself. My heart,
“ which before was the seat of silent
“ woe, now underwent the different

" vicissitudes of hope and fear. ' Could
 " I,' said I to myself, ' but see him
 " once more, methinks I should be
 " happy, only to have the means of
 " repairing my rude behaviour.' Full
 " of these reflections I returned home;
 " my mind occupied with a thousand
 " various ideas which this little adven-
 " ture had occasioned. The next day
 " I was in doubt whether prudence
 " should restrain me from my rural
 " shade; but, as I could find no mate-
 " rial cause for my absence, and Inclination
 " being a powerful combatant,
 " I submitted to her will, and revisited

G

" the

“ the much-loved spot, which was
“ now more pleasing to me, than
“ before.

“ When I came to the seat, how in-
“ finite was my astonishment to find it
“ ornamented with the most beautiful
“ bouquets of flowers, which were pla-
“ ced in baskets, and tied with bows
“ of ribband to the boughs of the trees !
“ Fruits too of the most delicious kinds
“ were interspersed in the same manner
“ among the branches; and they were
“ disposed with such peculiar elegance,
“ that it had the most pastoral and en-
“ chant-

“chanting effect. I was so struck with
 “wonder, that it was many minutes
 “before I could resolve how to act. I
 “thought of no one but the hand-
 “some officer I saw the day before,
 “who could have shewn so much taste.
 “I determined however to let them re-
 “main untouched till I had the advice
 “of my friend Jemima, as I recollected
 “that, beneath the most specious ap-
 “pearances, there often lurks a veno-
 “mous serpent.

“I instantly quitted my retirement,
 “though it was adorned with so many

“ additional charms, and determined to
“ consult my friend upon this singular
“ event ; but unluckily (as I then ima-
“ gined) my mother desired my attend-
“ ance at home, saying, ‘ She had a
“ large company of her acquaintance
“ that evening.’ Guess my amazement,
“ when, among the number, I saw
“ enter the same officer who had disco-
“ vered my solitude.

“ No sooner was he introduced to me,
“ than I felt every nerve in motion, and
“ had as great difficulty to speak as
“ when he addressed me before. He was
“ particularly attentive to me ; but

I

“ when

“ when he spoke of the beautiful re-
 “ treat I had chosen, I did summon
 “ resolution to mention how elegantly
 “ I found it ornamented the last time
 “ I went there. He owned, ‘ It was
 “ done by himself;’ and added, ‘ He
 “ was completely happy if I approved
 “ of it.’

“ I found he was on a visit in the
 “ neighbourhood; that his name was
 “ Mellish; and that he was much re-
 “ spected by every one who was ac-
 “ quainted with his excellencies. My
 “ father was extremely pleased with

“ him, and invited him frequently to the
“ house. This acquisition to our so-
“ ciety seemed a very happy circum-
“ stance for me ; I was not only pleased
“ with his good sense and amiable man-
“ ners, but it lessened the impetuosity
“ of my mother’s temper towards me,
“ as she did not like to discover it to
“ the world.

“ Mellish was equally pleased with
“ me, as I could be with him, and a
“ mutual partiality daily increased. In-
“ deed, his first appearance prejudiced
“ me in his favour ; and when I feared
“ mak-

“ making a breach in politeness, there
“ were other reasons much stronger
“ for my apprehensions, which I could
“ not then foresee. When Mellish
“ had known me long enough to find
“ he could not bear the reflection of
“ absence, he solicited my hand, with
“ that energy, and yet that diffidence,
“ which ever accompanies real love.
“ ‘ Alas! Mr. Mellish,’ said I, ‘ you
“ do not know what you ask? I am a
“ poor dependant, upon the slender
“ bounty of an unfeeling parent, who
“ may, for aught I know, leave me
“ a miserable penny-less wanderer: it

“ was some of these contemplations I
“ was weeping over when first you saw
“ me.’ ‘ And can that be the lot of
“ my lovely Anna!’ exclaimed Henry,
“ ‘ then am I happier than ever, if I
“ can extricate her from such an inhu-
“ man wretch! My fortune is not pro-
“ fuse,’ added he, ‘ but it will purchase
“ us ease and comfort.’ I begged he
“ would entreat the consent of my mo-
“ ther; which she absolutely refused,
“ by asking, ‘ if we meant to be beg-
“ gars? I have nothing to spare,’ said
“ she to Henry, ‘ at least till my death;
“ and that will be a mere trifle; and
“ you

“ you have as little. Indeed, I am
“ not quite such an idiot to consent to
“ my daughter’s begging her bread ;
“ therefore I insist on it, Mr. Mellish,
“ you do not turn her brain with adu-
“ lation, which is already overcome
“ with pride.’ This was a reply I ex-
“ pected; but to the tender heart of
“ Henry it was very severe indeed.
“ However, he declared, ‘ If I would
“ give him my hand, he would take
“ care I should live comfortably; and
“ that his first delight would be to re-
“ scue me from the power of such bar-
“ barity.’ After much persuasion I

“agreed to be his. Censure me not,
“Mr. Bromley, I already sufficiently
“reproach myself. Though my mo-
“ther treated me unlike a parent, I
“should have behaved with duty; but
“I have suffered, I hope, enough;
“and that the debt is paid in this
“world.”

Here Miranda wept, and was unable to continue! Therefore Lavinia begged her to retire, and she would end the sad catastrophe.

“Anna,”

“ Anna,” said she, “ had fixed
“ the day and hour when she meant to
“ elope with Captain Mellish. I was
“ with her on the evening she intended
“ to quit her mother’s house. While
“ we were waiting in momentary ex-
“ pectation of the carriage, which was
“ to convey her from that hateful
“ dwelling, a messenger brought a
“ letter to the window, and left us
“ almost lost in astonishment. It was
“ for some time before I had resolution
“ to open it: as to poor Anna, her
“ mind was full of a thousand fore-

“ boding fears, which proved but too
“ true. The letter contained these
“ words:

“ “ Arm yourself, my dearest Anna,
“ with all your fortitude; remember,
“ the better we bear our trials here,
“ so much the higher shall we be ex-
“ alted in happiness hereafter. This
“ is a lesson I doubt not your own
“ good sense has long since dictated;
“ but there are periods when the wisest
“ of us stand in need of counsel; this,
“ I fear, will be your case. The in-
“ stant I left you this morning, after
“ our

“our walk, I rode away directly to
“give the necessary orders for the fan-
“cied happy evening. (Alas! how
“vain to depend on the next hour’s fe-
“licity!). On my return, I was
“thrown from my horse, and received
“a violent wound in my head. The
“surgeon gives me little hopes of re-
“covery.

“I have made you, my lovely Anna,
“the sole mistress of my trifling for-
“tune; and, if you regard me, in-
“stantly quit that detested house. The
“gentle Jemima will always be a com-
“fort

“fort to you; and, though deprived of
“your Henry, think yourself rich in
“her friendship. What I feel on leav-
“ving this world would be nothing,
“were I not to be separated from the
“partner of my affections; but, my
“Anna, we shall meet again in those
“blessed regions, where misery ceases
“for ever! Think on this, and be re-
“signed! The pen trembles in my
“fingers, and I must write no more!

“Your faithful

“HENRY.”

“Though

“ Though I broke this unhappy
“ event with all the tendernefs I was
“ capable of, poor Anna was almost
“ frantic with grief. The next day I
“ heard the unfortunate Henry was no
“ more. This ſhe readily conjectured.
“ I recovered her ſo far as to take her
“ home with me, that I might be con-
“ tinually with her. When her inhu-
“ man mother heard the news, ſhe ex-
“ preſſed her joy, that now her com-
“ mands could not be broken; for
“ though ſhe did not know the time was

“ actually fixed, yet she had reason
“ to believe what were their intentions.

“ Poor Anna had a most dangerous
“ illness, during which I never left
“ her; and with constant attention she
“ recovered, but was in the most de-
“ jected state some months. When
“ she was able, her mother insisted on
“ her return, which prolonged her
“ distresses. She would have instantly
“ left the house, but for an affair
“ which concerned my future fate, and
“ was not then concluded; of that I
“ will give you the particulars in my
“ short

“short narrative. I will only add, in
“the remainder of this, that, when my
“cup was filled with misfortune, and
“we were each of us almost overwhel-
“med with despair, from the villainies
“of a sinful world, we determined to
“retire from its deceits: could we
“have known the future, we had
“escaped infinite sorrows had we left it
“many years before! And thus,” said
Lavinia, “I sincerely hope end the
“woes of Miranda.”

Mr. Bromley was much affected with
this relation; and the more so, as he
had

had only received hints before of the death of his friend, which were now too fatally confirmed.

“Alas! who ought,” said Mr. Bromley, “to repine at their afflictions! “we have all of us our share, and it is “right that it should be so, or our ideas “would soar no higher than this gro- “veling earth; but,” added he, “in “all our troubles, there is some re- “source to lighten them. You, most “amiable Lavinia, have been an in- “strument, in the divine hand, to pro- “tect the despairing Anna, or she “would

“ would long since have joined her
“ Henry. As the different incidents of
“ your lives have been so connected,
“ it is pity the knot should be now se-
“ vered, by relating them at separate
“ times; therefore, if the fair Lavi-
“ nia is not fatigued,” said Mr. Brom-
ley, “ I will solicit a continuation of
“ the history, with what relates to
“ herself.” Lavinia said, “ The plea-
“ sure of obliging him would in some
“ degree alleviate the recollection of
“ her sorrows. Deceit,” she observed,
“ had been the canker worm which had
“ preyed upon her peace; if such a
“ tale

“ tale could be pleasing to Mr. Bromley,
“ she would endeavour to repeat it.”

He entreated her to proceed, and she spoke as follows:

“ My origin,” said Lavinia, “ I
“ derive from parents of high family,
“ and splendid fortune, who had a
“ magnificent seat in Somersetshire;
“ their names were Wentworth. When
“ I was only two years old, my mother
“ died. As they had no other child, I
“ was a very great favourite. At the
“ age of fourteen I was so unfortunate
“ a:

“ as to lose my father. He left me
“ every thing his power, and I became
“ a very rich heiress. An old friend
“ of my father’s, of the name of Leslie,
“ was appointed my guardian, and I
“ went to reside with him and his lady.
“ They had one son, of my own age, a
“ very handsome boy ; we were con-
“ tinually together, and had conceived
“ a reciprocal attachment for each
“ other, which was much encour-
“ aged by my Guardian. Though
“ young Augustus had but a slender
“ income, yet, as mine was large, it
“ was no objection with me ; true love,

“ as

“ as mine really was, looks on gold as
“ a secondary consideration. It was
“ determined, when we came of age, we
“ were to be united. I had no thoughts
“ beyond my Augustus; and he ap-
“ peared equally sincere: but, alas!
“ it was only the shadow, perfect in
“ its form, but a phantom in reality.
“ When I came of age, every thing
“ was preparing for our nuptials; but
“ my Guardian was seized with a fit, and
“ expired immediately. This melan-
“ choly event prolonged the ceremony
“ for some time. But when every
“ thing was settled relative to our wed-
“ ding,

“ding, and the day was fixed, Au-
“gustus said, ‘He must go out, for
“a short time, before it took place;
“but would return the evening pre-
“ceding our marriage.’ After taking
“the most affectionate farewell, he de-
“parted; but, when the time came for
“his return, no lover appeared. The
“morning arrived, but without my
“Augustus; and judge my astonish-
“ment, when I found his mother had
“also decamped in the night, and I
“was left with only servants in the
“house, who were all (except one
“who accompanied her) equally igno-
“rant

“rant of her departure. I instantly
“conjectured there must be some vil-
“lainy; but little imagined the black-
“ness of its hue. I dispatched messen-
“gers every where I could possibly
“think of; and at length the only
“tidings I could learn were, that a
“person of Leslie’s description had set
“off from town that morning, in a
“chaise and four, with a very hand-
“some young woman. I was almost
“overpowered with consternation; I
“could not feel that delicate melan-
“choly which preys upon our more
“refined sensations; mine was a mix-
“ture

“ ture of horror and violent agitation.
 “ Poor Anna came to comfort me,
 “ when she stood in need of consolation
 “ herself, and was too weak to bear
 “ another shock, without considerably
 “ injuring her tender frame.”

Mr. Bromley was thunderstruck at
 this recital: “ And can there,” said
 he, “ be such wretches existing! I
 “ had hoped the world was not quite so
 “ depraved.”

“ Oh,” said Lavinia, “ had his vil-
 “ lainy ended here, it would have been
 H “ well

“ well, but it was far worse; he
“ had recourse to forgery, and carried
“ off all my money, except one thou-
“ sand pounds, which he had the hu-
“ manity to leave, to save me from want;
“ and for that I thank him, the misery
“ will be upon his own head. I can
“ live comfortably without riches, and
“ am contented, though deprived of
“ them; but have we not, Mr. Brom-
“ ley, had a sufficient trial of the
“ world, to be weary of it?”

Mr. Bromley was almost overcome
with rage at this account. He asked

Lavinia, "If she had heard of Lessie
"since!"

She said, "She had not, and sin-
"cerely wished she never might. After
"these distresses," observed Lavinia,
"you cannot wonder at our desire to
"reign all future converse with society.
"Anna was well provided for by Henry,
"and my little remnant added to
"it, we went in pursuit of some spot,
"where we might end our days in har-
"mony; and after many sought in vain,
"we were at last thus amply recom-
"penced for all our troubles, by ob-
H 2 "taining

“ taining permission to erect a Cottage
“ in this delightful place. Here we
“ have remained unmolested and un-
“ heard-of by the world, till happily
“ for us you chanced upon our abode.
“ We took the names we now bear
“ that we might not be discovered.
“ Anna was in great dread of being
“ found by her mother, who we heard
“ made many researches when she
“ knew we were gone. She had left
“ home some time to be with me,
“ therefore the evening preceding our
“ departure she wrote this Letter to
“ her mother, which I will read to you:
“ ‘ Much

“ ‘ Much honoured Madam,

“ Will you believe me sincere, when
“ I declare, it is not without many
“ pangs I quit my native dwelling.
“ To-morrow I shall bid adieu to this
“ country, perhaps for ever! It is im-
“ possible for me to forget past afflictions,
“ in a spot where every object,
“ every walk, and each hill or vale,
“ continually renews them. Rather
“ than follow me to the tomb, I am
“ certain my honoured mother would
“ gladly suffer me to leave a scene,

H 3

“ which

“ which is daily the cause of never-cea-
“ sing woe, and in the end must bring
“ on a total decay. My dear Jemima
“ has also drank deeply of the poisonous
“ draughts of adversity; and we mean
“ to pass the remainder of our lives,
“ secluded from the world, in some re-
“ tired Cottage. To bid adieu to a
“ parent is a bitter thought; but, alas!
“ your Anna has failed to deserve that
“ affection which would have been to
“ her so great a blessing; therefore she
“ will no longer wound your peace
“ with the society of an undutiful child.
“ Will you indulge me, my revered
“ mother,

“mother, with one embrace before we
“separate, perhaps for ever? If not,
“I shall never omit to pray for your
“lasting happiness. And may your
“other children prove a continual
“source of comfort to you, and be
“more deserving your regard, than
“your affectionate and unfortunate

“ANNA!”

“Though so tenderly penned,” said
Lavinia, “she never replied to it; nor
“would she consent to an interview with
“Anna. She has often had the means
“of hearing of her, by an honest old

H 4

“woman

“ woman in the village ; and our Letters,” said Lavinia, “ which are
“ very few, are left for us at the
“ house of Lucinda’s mother ; but
“ lately the old woman is dead, and
“ we have not heard of Anna’s mother
“ for some time.”

Mr. Bromley was deeply touched with these melancholy narrations. “ May heaven,” said he, “ bless your
“ future days with such content as you
“ now enjoy !”

Miranda,

Miranda, who had been amusing herself with her guitar, now entered.

“Well, Mr. Bromley,” said she, “do not you think we have cause to detest the world?” He repeated his observations, and added, “That he hoped, they should make each other happy, for the remainder of their existence.”

Miranda said, “Her only present anxiety was for her brother, whom she had never heard of since he failed. “But Hope,” exclaimed Miranda,

H 5

“that

“that balm to the depressed heart,
“leads me to imagine I shall again be-
“hold him.” Mr. Bromley soon be-
came perfectly settled in his new
abode; and every thing wore the
aspect of that serenity which true
virtue can alone inspire. Mr. Brom-
ley generally amused the ladies by
reading while they worked, and their
evenings were spent in walking. One
morning Miranda begged to make an
observation before he began his daily
entertainment: “We are now,” said
she, “very tranquil and composed,
“and Heaven only knows the fate of

“to-

“ to-morrow ; therefore let us use the
“ time allotted us in doing all we can,
“ which may contribute to the happi-
“ nefs of others ; fuppofe then we
“ haften the wedding of Edwin and
“ Lucinda ; we will, if pleafing to my
“ worthy friends, walk to the houfe
“ of Lucinda’s parents, and if they will
“ confent to the union, it fhall immedi-
“ ately take place ; we have already
“ the permiffion of Edwin’s Father.”

Lavinia and Mr. Bromley were much
delighted with the propofal ; and as

soon as the evening approached, they bent their steps to the hamlet.

It was a neat little dwelling, and the most romantic but homely Cottage. The good old Dorcas was spinning at the door; in the window by her lay a bible, a spectacle-case, and an hour-glass; close to the embers sat a grave old musing cat, purring itself to sleep, while its frisky kitten was playing with the good old woman's pincushion. Every thing was arranged with the utmost neatness; and the old china relics of ancestry were placed in the exactest form.

form. A little village cur announced their arrival, and when the honest old woman saw them coming, so great was her joy, that in her hurry she overset her wheel.

“Heaven bless these dear Ladies!” said she, “they are so good that the sight of ’em makes my old heart dance.” When she saw a stranger she was cautious of speaking; but Lavinia informed her that Mr. Bromley was a particular friend, and knew their whole histories; therefore Dorcas proceeded in her encomiums without hesitation.

tation. " Ah, Sir !" said she, " you
" are a happy man to be among such
" dear ladies ; if it had not been for
" them, we should have been starved.
" When my poor old man lay at
" Death's door, they cured him ; and
" they pays our rent for us every year.
" When my sweet little Rachael and
" Polly died, they buried 'em ; and
" such pretty buryings you never see ;
" and they took our Lucy, and have
" made her what she is ; every body
" loves 'em."

She

She was going on at this rate, and would probably have talked for an hour or two more (for when gratitude enters the door of poverty, it is of the purest kind), but Miranda interrupted her by asking, "If she would agree to her daughter's marriage." "Ah! "Madam," said she, "you little know what miseries we poor folks suffer; you had better persuade her off on't." When Miranda told her she should live with her, and she would provide for her and Edwin too, the good old Dorcas fell on her knees, and,

over

overcome by her tears could only thank her in silence. She ran and called her husband, who was digging in his garden. He was equally overjoyed and grateful as his wife. "God blefs you!" said the old man, "you makes every body happy about you; now when Lucy is well settled, I shall die contented."

Miranda having obtained the consent she wished, proposed their return; but the good old pair said they should have somewhat to eat and drink; and they fetched a bottle of grape wine, which

which Miranda had sent them a few days before, and a plate of strawberries and cherries. As they returned home they passed several other cottages; and Mr. Bromley was much astonished, to see that not even a little child would let them pass unnoticed; some brought fruit; others bouquets of flowers; in short, every one seemed to look on them as angelic beings.

When Lucinda heard she might be united to her Edwin, she wept for joy: she sung, and was impatient till her lover could partake the happy tidings.

It

It was determined that the amiable friends should attend the ceremony, as Miranda and Lavinia were the sole presidents over the scene of rural festivity. Lucinda was habited as a shepherdess, in a white jacket with a small hat, ornamented with a wreath of roses and jasmine. Edwin was attired as a shepherd, with a garland of natural flowers across his jacket. Six little girls in white led the way, and strewed their path with flowers. Lucinda was the picture of innocence and modesty, and Edwin was the handsomest shepherd of the fields. The good old parents attended

tended their beauteous offspring, and with heart-felt pleasure and delight looked back to that day which was now renewed in their beloved children. Miranda and Lavinia could not forbear shedding some drops of sorrow during the ceremony; not only the solemnity affected them, but a train of melancholy reflections would intrude upon their imaginations. Mr. Bromley too remembered that happy day when he saw the lovely Juliana blushing by his side, and an unbidden tear trickled down his manly cheek: however, the exquisite bliss of bestowing happiness in

in some measure chased away the oppression they would otherwise have felt.

Miranda ordered a rustic repast to be prepared at Dorcas's cottage, to which the happy couple and their attendants repaired, after they quitted the church, and in the evening Miranda promised to come, and be a spectator of their mirth. All Lucinda's village friends were to be present; and they were to have a rural dance upon the green. It was agreed that Lucinda and her Edwin should continue to reside at the Cottage of Friendship,

ship, and follow the same employment they had done before. The amiable friends felt impatient, till they were at the hamlet, to partake of this festive scene, and early in the evening they departed to the happy spot. The sound of the tabor and pipe soon convinced them the dance was began. Every one appeared in extasy; the old couples sat smiling beneath the shade of an ancient oak, and fancied themselves young again in their children. In honour of the Bride, the village nymphs and swains wore the habit of a shepherd and shepherdess, and it was

was the most enchanting scene of pleasure without alloy (at least so the lovely sisters hoped); but as Miranda was observing each object around her, she saw a female figure sitting in a pensive manner upon the grass, at some distance from the rest of the company. This excited the curiosity of Mr. Bromley and his fair friends, as she appeared to have come there to celebrate the day, but could not join in the universal joy. They enquired of the Shepherds, who she was? "Oh!" they answered, "it was only Lucy, who had come there, and now would not dance with them."

“ them.” Miranda asked, “ What her
“ name was besides Lucy ?” They said,
“ Nobody knew.” Perhaps, Madam,”
said Lucinda, “ if you speak to her,
“ she will tell you; but she won’t let
“ us know who she is. The woman
“ she lived with is just dead, and I
“ believe she pines for her, and is
“ very poor now.”

This account excited the curiosity of
the sisters and Mr. Bromley; and they
determined to speak to her. It was
agreed that Lavinia and Mr. Bromley
should retire; while Miranda endea-
voured

voured to discover, the history of this pensive mourner. She seemed very intently looking at something; therefore Miranda passed gently behind her, that she might find out what it was. As she knew of no one being near her, she held a picture, and pronounced these words: "And must you too be taken
" from me; alas! I will sooner starve
" than part from the only blessing I now
" enjoy, the picture of my long-lost
" parent."

I

Miranda

Miranda approached her, and in the tenderest accents begged to know, "Why she did not join in the general joy?"

She started at being thus accosted, and rose to answer Miranda. "Oh, Madam!" said she, "was you acquainted with my misfortunes, you would not be astonished at my melancholy; but I know your goodness, and therefore you shall hear the cause of my sorrows. When very young, I was taken away from

I " my

“ my parents by Gypsies. With them
“ I wandered about, till a good woman,
“ at whose house we were begging,
“ seeing I was not one of their race,
“ bought me of them through pity.
“ She had no child, and was a widow.
“ She kept a little shop, and we lived
“ very comfortably till about a month
“ ago, when she died. As she left
“ nothing but her furniture, I am obli-
“ ged to sell that to pay the rent; and
“ when the trifling overplus is gone,
“ Heaven knows what will become of
“ me! This picture,” said she, “ was
“ about my neck when I was taken
7 “ away,

“ away, and they had the humanity to
 “ leave it me; but, should I be obliged
 “ to sell my dear mother’s gift for sub-
 “ sistence, it would be death to me
 “ indeed.”

Miranda asked her, “ If she had
 “ made any enquiries after her father
 “ and mother?” She said, “ Yes, but
 “ without effect; and she was too
 “ young, when taken away, to recol-
 “ lect the place of her nativity, or any
 “ circumstance till the time of her
 “ being released out of the hands of
 “ the Gypsies. What she knew was

“ from the good woman with whom she
“ lived ; and the picture she imagined
“ must have been her mother’s, which
“ led her to suppose she was the daugh-
“ ter of genteel parents.”

Miranda no longer doubted, that this must be the long-lost child of Mr. Bromley. After having opened the approaching happiness in the most delicate manner to the fair Louisa (for she was almost certain this was the daughter Mr. Bromley had mourned for), she took the picture to him. The instant he beheld it, he exclaimed, “ It

“ is my Juliana herself! she lives again
“ in this picture; and that is my lovely
“ Louisa; let me fly to her embraces!”

Such of my readers as are endowed with all the genuine soul of sensibility and true sympathy, will alone be the proper judges of such a scene of parental and filial affection. What a luxurious moment then for the amiable sisters; so capable as were their feelings to taste the sweet and bitter portions this life is continually subject to!

When the first effusions of bliss were over, Mr. Bromley turning to Miranda and Lavinia, said, " May I, most
" angelic of women, commit this long-
" lost treasure to your care? If she is
" like her dear mother, she will be an
" acquisition to you; but, if otherwise,
" she shall not ruffle the serenity of
" the happy Cottage. She has had no
" tender mother to lead her from the
" mazy road of vice, nor a father's
" instruction to bid her follow the foot-
" steps of her virtuous mother; but,
" when the soil is good, the flower ge-
" nerally

“nerally blossoms in perfection; and
 “may this be the case with my
 “Louisa!”

Miranda and Lavinia expressed infinite happiness in the additional society of Louisa; and to see Mr. Bromley so unexpectedly blessed, was a greater pleasure than they had aspired to hope for in this life.

Louisa, almost overcome with rapture and astonishment, thus exclaimed,
 “Who ought to repine at their fate,
 “while we have so good, so indulgent

“ a preserver ! When I fancied my-
“ self on the brink of despair, the
“ mercy of Providence has seated me in
“ the midst of every comfort ! How
“ infinitely do I reproach myself for
“ not having placed more confidence
“ in that Divine Power whonever for-
“ sakes his servants in affliction ! But,”
said Louisa, “ I have still another desire
“ ungratified, which is to see my poor
“ mother ; what pangs must she have
“ suffered on my account !”

“ Alas !” said Mr. Bromley, “ to
“ meet her, my dear child, is a delight
“ you

“ you must never expect to enjoy here
 “ below; she is long since departed to
 “ better regions.” (He forbore to tell
 the cause of her death, lest it might
 hurt the mind of his daughter). This
 information grieved the tender heart of
 Louisa, and she wept: however, recovering
 herself, she said, “ She ought
 “ not to complain, since she had so
 “ much treasure left her upon earth.”

When the rustic cottagers heard this
 happy event, they sung, they danced,
 with increasing alacrity, and another
 tabor was found to celebrate the joyful
 I 5 tidings,

tidings, till the shades of night summoned them to repose, when the lovely sisters and their friends proceeded to the peaceful Cottage.

“ Now,” said Mr. Bromley to Louisa, “ think yourself the most fortunate
“ of women; you will be surrounded
“ by the Virtues and the Graces, accompanied with every beauty nature
“ can give to the spot around you.
“ Here dwells Content unsullied by ambition; and Friendship untinctured
“ with deceit.”

Louisa

Louisa expressed the most lively gratitude on the admission to so desirable an abode; and said, “she hoped to profit by the good examples before her, listen to their precepts, and in the end be deserving so much kindness.”

Mr. Bromley settled every thing which related to the friend Louisa had lost, and attired her like the fair sisters. She had a fine melancholy countenance and an elegant figure. Mr. Bromley said she much resembled her mother.

Louisa was greatly pleased with the Cottage ; and, as every thing was again tranquil, they amused Louisa with shewing her all the natural beauties of the wood. One day when Miranda and Lavinia were alone, they remarked, that there was still a cloud upon the brow of their young friend ; but they fancied it might proceed from the loss of the good woman with whom she lived, therefore took no further notice of it, till one evening, Miranda going hastily into Louisa's apartment, found her in tears. She immediately desired

to

to know the cause; but Louisa continued weeping, and gave her no answer.

“ My dearest girl,” said Miranda, “ I
“ entreat you to inform me what it is
“ that distresses you? Your happiness
“ is mine, and I cannot be serene till
“ you are so likewise.” “ Then,” said
Louisa, “ it would be sacrilege to dis-
“ turb such heavenly repose; and I
“ will instantly relate the cause of my
“ affliction. While I was one day in
“ the shop of the good widow with
“ whom I lived, there entered a hand-
“ some young man in a naval uniform.
“ He

“ He purchased some trifle, and went
“ away ; but he was continually calling
“ on some pretended occasion ; and
“ after many visits, he declared him-
“ self my lover. I was particularly
“ struck with the smartness of his ap-
“ pearance, which with a young mind
“ is a primary consideration, and I
“ returned his regard. He told me his
“ sole income was what he received
“ from his profession ; and I having no
“ fortune, we thought it proper to
“ defer our marriage till something ad-
“ vantageous might happen ; our love
“ we could not at any rate resign, that
“ was

“ was immoveable. One unfortunate
“ day, when I expected to see my Fre-
“ derick, I received a letter which
“ contained this distressing news :

“ ‘ My dearest life,
“ How will you bear the melancholy
“ recital ! When I left you yesterday,
“ I was cruelly seized and thrown into
“ prison, for a debt which I have been
“ security for, for a mother, who
“ hardly deserves that name. Had I
“ not lost a large sum in my passage,
“ I could have paid it ; but now, when
“ I shall be extricated, Heaven only
“ knows.

“ knows. Comfort yourself, my
“ dearest Lucy, with the hope of better
“ days; and, believe me, no time can
“ erase you from the memory of
“ Your faithful

“ FREDERIC.”

“ This, Madam,” said Louisa, “ is
“ the cause of my tears; and a heart
“ like yours can judge of my feelings.”
There was a something in this letter,
which particularly struck Miranda, and
she felt a cold chill overspread her
whole frame; however, recovering her-
self, she ran to Mr. Bromley with the
un-

unfortunate story of Louisa. He was much surprized and affected, but promised to relieve his daughter from this distress, by paying the debt, and releasing Louisa's lover. No pen can describe the extasy she was in at this declaration. She knelt down to thank the Almighty for his goodness, and embraced her father with the tenderest love, for his exquisite kindness to her. He instantly wrote a letter, and inclosed the money; but, when he asked her lover's name, what a discovery did he make! it was Miranda's brother! She had only hoped before that it might

might be so, but now she was convinced. Extreme joy for some minutes deadened every sensation; but, when a milder calm ensued, never was a scene of greater happiness, or natures more calculated to enjoy it.

In a few days the much-loved Frederick arrived at the Cottage. This rendered the transports of joy perfectly complete; and to find his sister in such a happy abode was what he so little expected, that he was lost in amazement and wonder. His Louisa too greeted him with the most lively raptures,

tures, and they were many days in relating each other's histories, which were so truly amiable, that, like the blossoms in spring, some new beauty daily expanded itself to the view. Miranda's brother observed, " That the events of
" his life were few and uninteresting,
" as most of his years had been spent on
" the sea; but, a few days after his arrival chancing to pass by the house of
" Louisa's friend, he accidentally went
" in, and returned a captive fast linked
" in the rosy fetters of the sincerest
" love." He told Miranda, " Their
" mother had spent every thing; and
" that

“that several of her second children
“had treated her in the most inhuman
“manner.” Miranda was much hurt
at this information, and determined to
relieve her.

When Frederick found Louisa had
discovered her real parents, and had
taken her proper name, he still conti-
nued to love her as fervently as before,
and repeated his thanks to Mr. Brom-
ley, for the favour he had shewn him;
but poor, and disgraced by a prison,
he dared not solicit the hand of the
beauteous Louisa. Mr. Bromley’s pe-
netrating

netrating eye saw this with admiration, and he desired Louisa and Frederick would attend him at the Hermitage, where he thus addressed them :

“ My children” said he, “ for as
“ such I regard you both, may you
“ ever be happy in each other ! Take,
“ Frederick, the hand of Louisa, which
“ your worthy diffidence has debarred
“ you from soliciting ; make her what
“ she deserves to be, a happy woman.
“ And do you, my daughter, study
“ the duties you owe your husband,
“ so will your days glide smoothly on.
“ (by

“ (by the blessing of Heaven) till old
“ age closes the scene of mortality.
“ Be not, my Louisa, led away by
“ the vanities of an insipid world,
“ which in the eye of virtue melt away
“ like the snow before the morning
“ sun-beam; and if you have children,
“ train them up in that wise path you
“ have walked in, so will they have
“ cause to bless you as long as they
“ live. I have a sufficient fortune to
“ make yours an ample one; you shall
“ reside at the Grove, which I will
“ order to be improved and enlarged.
“ It was once the happiest abode to
“ your

“ your father ; may you enjoy a longer
“ continuance of uninterrupted tran-
“ quillity there than he did ! To see
“ this desire gratified will soften the
“ pangs of past sorrows ; and he will
“ make his exit in peace.”

Tears of gratitude and joy were the only thanks they could bestow, for the generosity of this excellent man, who, like all benevolent minds, instantly retired, that he might not put them to the trouble of numberless unnecessary acknowledgements they were anxious to pronounce.

Mr.

Mr. Bromley returned to the sisters, and when he told them how happy he had made the lovers, they both exclaimed, "What unexampled virtue, "goodness, and affection! How rich "are we in such a friend!" Scarcely had they finished speaking, when in ran the lovers, almost breathless, to inform Miranda and Lavinia of their happy fortune. When they saw Mr. Bromley, they knelt down, and thanked him in the most grateful manner, for his infinite goodness to them; and said,

" They

“ They would do all in their power to
 “ deserve so indulgent a parent.”

Mr. Bromley observed, “ He must
 “ go for a few days to the Grove, to
 “ give proper directions for the al-
 “ terations there, and pass some hours
 “ devoted to the memory of his lovely
 “ Juliana; and as the marriage of Lou-
 “ isa could not be properly solemnized
 “ till every thing was ready to receive
 “ them,” he said, “ he would lose no
 “ time in having the house prepared.”

And the next morning Mr. Bromley
 set off to the Grove. Though his

K absence

absence would be very short, yet every one wept at his departure, and entreated his speedy return. His society was a loss deeply felt by the whole circle, but by none so much as the amiable friends. The lovers were both very young, and could amuse themselves with rambling round the wood, and observing every beauty. They were truly virtuous and sincere; but few hearts are possessed of that exquisite sensibility which adorned the minds, of the lovely Miranda and Lavinia. While they were one day together, and the happy lovers were walk-

walking in the wood, Miranda said,

“Now, my dear Lavinia, I will

“shew you a letter I have written

“my poor unhappy mother. I hear

“she is distressed, and it is my duty

“to comfort and support her in adver-

“sity.” Miranda read thus.

“My dear and much honoured

“Mother,

“Do you imagine, because absent,

“your Anna has forgotten you, or

“ever omits to enquire your fate? no,

“my dear madam, the first care she

“has had since she quitted you, has

K 2

“been

“ been to learn if you continued happy.
“ The last accounts were so melancholy, that I am sincerely affected with your misfortunes; but
“ what is pity, without we can afford
“ more material relief? That is happily in my power, and I enclose
“ you a hundred pounds; if it will be
“ acceptable, your Anna is recompensed. I have the satisfaction to tell
“ you, my brother is with us, in a
“ little rural Cottage, where we have
“ dwelt in peace and harmony since
“ we took our leave of a tumultuous
“ world. He has left the sea, and
“ will

"will very soon be united to a most
 "lovely woman. Frederick is amply
 "provided for by her father.

"Adieu! my dearest madam,

"Your dutiful daughter

"ANNA MARIA WATERS."

When Miranda had fulfilled this duty, she felt a certain cheerfulness which ever accompanies a good action. The day now arrived which was to gratify them with another sight of the worthy Mr. Bromley, and they all walked to the extremity of the wood to meet him. When he approached,

each face wore the smile of the greatest delight. He informed them, "He had made every necessary preparation for the happy event; and in a few months the Grove would be ready to receive Louisa and her Frederick."

Many days passed on in the serene manner, with no new incident to chequer the worthy Cottagers' repose, till one morning, when Mr. Bromley was sitting alone, Lucinda ran in to tell him, "There was a poor man at the door asking charity." Mr. Bromley was much surprized, and rather

rather alarmed, as it was so unusual for them to see a stranger in their retired abodes. When Mr. Bromley appeared, the petitioner accosted him with the utmost reverence. He was habited neatly, but very plain, and had the manners of a gentleman. Just as he began to relate his misfortunes, Lavinia and Miranda were returning from a walk. When Lavinia beheld the countenance of the petitioner, it would be difficult to pronounce which was the most agitated and confused, the lovely sister or the humble stranger. They were both struck motionless for some

K 4 minutes.

minutes. At length Lavinia exclaimed, "Defend me," my dear friends, "from a wretch who has robbed me " of that peace which none but my Mi-
" randa could have restored me." Mi-
randa instantly knew it was the former pretended lover of Lavinia; and she intreated Mr. Bromley to take him to the Hermitage till Lavinia was a little composed.

When he was gone from her sight, she grew more serene. "Alas!" said she, "my dear Miranda, who then " can be happy, if even our retired
" Cot-

"Cottage cannot escape these intrusi-
 "ons? I have long since forgiven his
 "crimes; but to see him again, is too
 "great a punishment." Miranda beg-
 "ged, "she would reflect that some good
 "always attended each apparent ill;
 "and she felt convinced this would
 "prove so in the end."

The next morning Mr. Bromley en-
 treated permission to speak to Lavinia.
 She instantly came to him. "Most
 "amiable fair one," said he, "will
 "you listen a few minutes to the re-
 "quest I think your extreme goodness

“ will comply with. The unhappy
“ Leslie is wretched till you promise him
“ your free pardon for his former
“ crimes; and would you but see him
“ and permit him to vindicate himself,
“ it will be the last favour he will so-
“ licit at your hands.”

“ If it is your desire, Mr. Bromley,”
said Lavinia, “ I will certainly submit
“ to an interview with that unfortunate
“ man; but it will renew the severest
“ pangs in my bosom.”

“ Suspence,

“Suspence, my dear sister,” said Miranda, “is worse than the greatest affliction; therefore see him instantly.” Lavinia underwent many struggles, but at last she consented.

When she entered, it was with difficulty Mr. Leslie supported himself from falling, and several minutes before he could utter a syllable. After many repeated efforts, he said, “What must my ever dear Jemima think of my boldness, to appear before her whom I have so greatly injured; but I trust,

K 6

“when

“ when she knows the villainy I was
“ linked with, it will in some degree
“ palliate my offence. When first I
“ addressed you, most lovely Jemima,
“ my heart was pure, and regarded no
“ other object; but, unluckily for me,
“ I met with one of those detestable
“ women, who are made up of every
“ vice. She was beautiful, and by all
“ those insinuating arts they well
“ know how to use, led me so far from
“ the paths of virtue that I was lost in
“ the mazes of wickedness. She en-
“ snared my foot-steps, and, like a
“ bird that is caught in the net of the
“ fowler,

“fowler, the more I endeavoured to
“extricate myself, the more was I en-
“tangled. She persuaded me to take
“away the fortune of the lovely Je-
“mima, and to depart with her. I
“too readily complied with her desire.
“We immediately set off to Paris,
“where we had no sooner arrived,
“than she said, ‘If I would not marry
“her, she would have me confined
“for the robbery I had committed.’
“Judge what a situation I was in! to
“save my own life, I agreed to this
“wretch’s desires. We lived some
“time abroad; but when her extrava-
“gance

“ gance had nearly consumed our ill-
“ gotten wealth, she left me with two
“ helpless infants, almost destitute of
“ support; for, in her turn, she rob-
“ bed me of all the ready money she
“ could find. What a scene of distress
“ was I exposed to! and, what is worse
“ than all, the terrors of an evil con-
“ science! I thought it vain to stay
“ longer in a foreign country; there-
“ fore returned to England, in hopes of
“ finding my poor mother, and ob-
“ taining her pity for the innocent
“ babes; but, alas! to add to my
“ misfortunes, my ill behaviour had
“ short-

“ shortened her days! I heard in
“ Town, that, the evening before my
“ departure abroad, she had some in-
“ telligence of my villainy, and set off
“ in the night, to prevent it; but she
“ was too late. The shock overpow-
“ ered her so much, that she had
“ successive fits till the moment of her
“ death, which happened three days
“ after my departure. I have been
“ roaming about ever since, wholly
“ supported with the hand of charity;
“ and by accident, and my happier
“ fortune, have found the peaceful
“ dwelling of my adored *Jemima*.

“ Though

“Though I must ever be miserable
“for the injury I have done her, yet
“I have one comfort, that I have
“made some small justification of my-
“self. This I do not mean as a total
“vindication of myself; for the heart
“which is truly virtuous spurns the
“allurements of the wicked; but say,
“lovely *Jemima*, that you forgive me,
“and I am content.”

Lavinia replied, “My pardon, *Mr.*
“*Leslie*, you have long obtained, and,
“to regain my esteem, act honestly
“in future. I will give you an oppor-
“tunity

“tunity to amend, and live as becomes
“a man of integrity and justice. There
“is a sufficient sum for your present
“support; it will enable you to seek
“after some laudable employment,
“and when Louisa and her Frederick
“are united, your children shall be
“brought up under my care, and in
“our Cottage; but promise me not
“to revisit our abode but when it is
“with our permission, and make a
“solemn vow, never to discover our
“retreat.”

Mr.

Mr. Leslie was for several moments unable to express his thanks; but, when the first effusions of gratitude were in some measure abated, he spoke with that fervency which denotes a grateful heart. He said, "The only recompence he could make this angelic woman, was, his thanks, to pray for her happiness, and to finish his days like an honest man."

That Lavinia might not pain Mr. Leslie with a number of acknowledgements, or herself with hearing them, she

she immediately retired, after desiring to know where the children could be found. Miranda and her friend returned to the Cottage much happier than they came from it, because they had been doing good. Acts of charity were their greatest pleasures, and the more each could invent, so much the higher did they increase each other's felicity, and Miranda thanked her friend for this additional instance of her love.

“Alas!” said Lavinia, “how he
“is altered! that face, which was once
“hand-

"handsome, is now pallid, and worn for
"thin, that I scarcely knew him."

"I cannot help pitying him," said
Miranda, "though he has behaved so
"basely; bad precepts have brought
"many excellent minds to ruin, parti-
"cularly when inculcated by a different
"sex. We shall easily learn his true
"character by his future actions; and
"may he prove deserving our favour!"

While the amiable friends were
conversing in this manner, Lucinda
brought in a letter for Miranda; it
was

was her mother's sentiments, and contained what follows:

"My dearest and most amiable

"Daughter,

"Your conduct is a severe reproof,
"though to such an unfeeling heart
"as your guilty mother's. A death-
"bed, surrounded with poverty and
"wicked children, has opened my
"eyes, and I see the many virtues of
"my lovely Anna; but, alas! it is
"too late; it is not in my power to re-
"pair the injuries I have done her! I
"am now, my dearest child, upon the
"eve

“ eve of my departure; but with what
“ horrors do I look forward to the mo-
“ ment of dissolution ! I have shortened
“ the days of your good father: I
“ have been a source of continual dis-
“ tress to my beloved daughter; can I
“ then, with fortitude, bid adieu to
“ this world, when I reflect, how ill
“ I deserve a better? A thousand
“ thanks, my lovely girl, for your ge-
“ nerous present! Part of it shall sup-
“ port my family, and the rest will lay
“ me in the grave ! I am happy to hear
“ of your brother’s good fortune : may
“ you both experience every comfort
“ this

“this world can bestow! I die a sin-
 “cere penitent; and therefore trust in
 “the goodness of the Almighty for
 “mercy. Would I might be permit-
 “ted to be your guardian angel, and
 “protect you safely through this uncer-
 “tain life; but I have not merited such
 “a blessing. Adieu! my dear chil-
 “dren; forgive me; and I die so far
 “contented!

“Your affectionate mother

“MARIA WALLACE.”

When Miranda had read this melan-
 choly epistle (which was penned by
 another

another person), she was overcome with grief. She and her brother had determined to take a last embrace of their unhappy mother, when another letter arrived, to inform them she was no more ! Poor Miranda suffered the severest affliction, and her dear Lavinia was equally distressed for the sorrows of her friend.

“ I have one consolation,” said Miranda, “ in my sorrow ; my poor mother died a sincere penitent, and I trust the goodness of Providence has forgiven her. Had she been
I “ sooner

“ sooner awakened to a sense of her
 “ errors, how happy for herself and
 “ her unfortunate Anna.”

Mr. Bromley administered consolation to his much esteemed friend.
 “ Repine not, my Miranda,” said he,
 “ when the event, though melancholy,
 “ has brought with it so much good.
 “ Had your unhappy mother been
 “ taken off in a moment, you would
 “ have cause to mourn her fate;
 “ but she had time to repent; and, we
 “ are told, contrition, when sincere,
 “ is ever accepted at the throne of
 L “ Mercy.

“ Mercy. I had cause to grieve afresh
“ at the recollection of my poor Juli-
“ ana’s death, because her child would
“ have again been restored to her;
“ but when I reflect how much supe-
“ rior is her present happiness to any
“ she could have enjoyed on earth, it
“ appears wrong to lament her ab-
“ sence.”

These wise remarks were mutually
offered to each other as they severally
stood in need of comfort; and, with the
aid of religion, they in a short time re-
sumed their usual tranquillity, and con-
tinued

tinued to live in the happiest and most uninterrupted manner.

Mr. Bromley having received information that the Grove was completed, it was agreed that the nuptials of Louisa and her Frederick should be celebrated. On such an occasion even the happy sisters determined to leave their rural abode.

A few days preceding the happy one, they all set off to the Grove, not even Lucinda remained behind; and only Edwin was left, to guard the

L 2

happy

happy Cottage. When Miranda and her friend had quitted their peaceful retirement, an involuntary tear bedewed their lovely cheeks.

“Alas!” said Miranda, “would I could banish reflection! but it haunts me still, every object renews past sorrows.”

Lavinia too threw aside her veil, to wipe away an unbidden tear. However, they summoned all their fortitude, to appear cheerful on so joyous an occasion.

When they arrived at the Grove, they were delighted with the spot; it was romantic, and therefore the more pleasing to the fair sisters. The house was made exceedingly elegant, and the garden laid out with the most exquisite taste.

Scarcely had Miranda and Lavinia entered, before they went to the grove in which was the last earthly remains of the angelic Juliana and her dear father. Here they shed many tears, in remembrance of the worthy Sir William and

his amiable daughter, whom, though unknown to them, they loved for their many virtues. It cast a gloom too over the mind of the gentle Louisa; but Mr. Bromley endeavoured to divert their ideas from the melancholy that spot had occasioned.

When the morning came which was to unite the innocent Louisa to her Frederick, she appeared with all that delicate modesty which is a gem of the most brilliant lustre to the female character. Her countenance was serene, but enlivened with the bloom of
dis-

diffidence, which gave additional expression to her beautiful face. Contrary to the usual custom of a bride, Louisa was, by Miranda's instruction, attired in pale blue, to imitate the painters idea, who always habit the figure of modesty in that colour. It was a loose robe, of the most beautiful azure, and ornamented with a silver fringe. Her auburn hair flowed in nature's ringlets; and, like the fair sisters, was only adorned with a wreath of white roses. The amiable Miranda and Lavinia attended the wedding, and were habited entirely in white.

As they proceeded to church, twelve village maidens, in white, carried baskets of the most fragrant flowers, and strewed their path with sweets without a thorn.

“And may your walks, my worthy friends,” said Miranda, “be ever thus delightful! so will you meet with that bliss you merit, and which may it be the order of Providence you shall ever enjoy!”

Mr. Bromley could not be present at the marriage. He said, “it would
“be

“be too much for his weak spirits to
“undergo.”

When the ceremony was over, they returned to the Grove. Not seeing Mr. Bromley when they entered, they went in pursuit of him to the garden; where, to their great surprize, he was sitting under a most splendid canopy, and a band of music greeted their return. Mr. Bromley received them with tears of joy. They could scarce find words to express his kindness and unexampled tenderness to them.

When

When the first congratulations were over, the canopy was drawn up, and, to their great astonishment, discovered a number of young people of both sexes, in the most fantastic dresses, who were come to celebrate this festive day, by the request of Mr. Bromley. They instantly began dancing; and the day was finished with every token of mirth and the truest delight. In a few weeks Miranda and Lavinia returned to their peaceful dwelling, and Mr. Bromley was to follow them in a short time: for though he meant frequently

quently to be at the Grove, he could not resign his happy retirement and the friendship of the lovely sisters.

Always engaged in doing some good, Miranda and Lavinia immediately sent for the children of the unhappy Leslie. They proved to be two beautiful little girls; a circumstance they were much rejoiced at. Lavinia heard that their father had employed the money she gave him to procure a comfortable maintenance. He was admitted about twice a year to see his children; and, every time they saw him, he appeared im-

improved, and in a few years acquired a moderate fortune. Thus we see, that when there is a good foundation, and an honest heart, only led away by evil persuasions, Virtue may again resume her seat, and shine with her former radiance.

Miranda and Lavinia continued happy in themselves; and the acts of charity they continually conferred were a lasting source of felicity to them. Mr. Bromley added frequently to their pleasure, and they continued patterns of excellence and goodness to the last

mo-

moment of their lives; and Louisa and her Frederick enjoyed the most uninterrupted delight, the present scene of uncertainty can allow.

This little history, trifling as it may appear, yet it must remind us, that under every calamity we should be patient and resigned; always remembering, that, if we act well, we shall ever find some relief, and though Providence may afflict us for a while, it is for some good purpose. With these true reflections, shall we pass serenely through this insignificant world, and,
when

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when we take our leave of it, shall be
deserving of a better. It is a staff of
comfort on which the patient in misfor-
tune find support; and, to obtain its
aid, let us, my fair readers, imitate
the virtues of Miranda and Lavinia.

F I N I S.



